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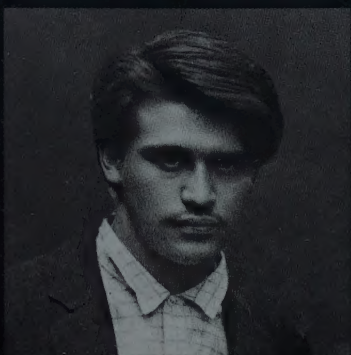


ПУНИ

WORKS FROM THE HERMAN BERNINGER COLLECTION, ZÜRICH

MUSEUM JEAN TINGUELY BASEL





Born in 1892 near Saint Petersburg, Ivan Puni is regarded as one of the founders and leading lights of the Russian avant-garde, alongside Kazimir Malevich and others. He was an organizer of and participant in the legendary futurist exhibitions "*Tramway V*" and "*0.10*". In 1918 he started teaching at the State Free Art Workshops (the former art academy) in Saint Petersburg (then renamed Petrograd), before Chagall offered him a post at the art school he was founding in Vitebsk. Puni was one of the first avant-garde artists to realize how difficult it would be to work independently of Soviet propaganda, and in 1919 he decided to go into exile. He lived in Berlin until 1923 before settling permanently in Paris.

The exhibition in the Museum Jean Tinguely has been organized in part as an homage to Herman Berninger, a friend of Puni and collector of his work. Berninger met Puni (then working under the name of Jean Pougny) and his wife, Xana, in Paris in 1952. After Puni's death in 1956 Berninger and Puni's widow compiled a catalogue raisonné and organized a number of retrospectives. Thanks to Berninger's untiring efforts on behalf of Puni's œuvre, a number of paintings thought to have been lost – especially from his Russian and Berlin periods – were rediscovered. One of the most spectacular finds was Puni's masterpiece the *Synthetischer Musiker* (The synthetic musician), painted in 1922 for the "Grosse Ber-

liner Kunstausstellung", which Berninger tracked down in Denmark in 1965.

Individual works from the Berninger Collection have been shown at all recent major exhibitions on the Russian or European avant-garde; now, for the first time, the Jean Tinguely Museum offers the public an opportunity to view a representative cross section of the Berninger Collection and its important works by this Russian avant-garde artist. The retrospective includes a selection of works from all periods of Puni's long painting career: cubo-futurist still lifes, suprematist compositions from his Saint Petersburg and Berlin periods, ink drawings, works clearly influenced by *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New objectivity), and the emphatically painterly works of his later years.

Regardless of stylistic expression, the question of the relationship between reality and image is a constant leit-motif in Puni's work. Color fields, plastic form, letters of the alphabet, words, and everyday objects had equal importance for his painting. In the course of his artistic development, however, he came increasingly to regard abstraction as a dead end and returned to painting still lifes, interiors, and street scenes, which he rendered in ornamental, planar compositions.

Ivan Puni and Photographs of the Russian Revolution



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**0,10**

**Ivan Puni**

Works from the Collection Herman Berninger, Zurich  
and Photographs of the Russian Revolution  
from the Collection Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

**12 April to 28 September 2003**

**Museum Jean Tinguely**



This book is being published on the occasion  
of the exhibition

**0.10: Ivan Puni and Photographs  
of the Russian Revolution**

Museum Jean Tinguely Basel  
11 April to 28 September 2003

Jacket Illustrations:  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*BANI (Baths)*, 1915, 73 x 92 cm  
Oil on canvas; on the verso of a  
landscape painting  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Viktor Bulla  
Uritski Square near the Alexander Column  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Frontispiece:  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster announcing a lecture by Kazimir Malevich  
and Ivan Puni on modern art, on the occasion of  
the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'"  
on 12 January 1916  
70 x 53,5 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Inside of Jacket:  
Ivan Puni at the age of nineteen, 1911

Sabine Weiss: Jean Pougny at the age  
of sixty-two, 1954

**Catalog**

**Editor**  
Museum Jean Tinguely Basel

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Jean Tinguely Basel

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МАРСОВО ПОЛЕ, № 7.

**ПОСЛѢДНЯЯ  
ФУТУРИСТИЧЕСКАЯ  
ВЫСТАВКА КАРТИНЪ  
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Fig. 1  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster for the opening of the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" on 19 December 1915, 1915  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Guido Magnaguagno

**Foreword**

Hey, you! Sky!  
Lift your hat!  
I am coming!

*Vladimir Mayakovsky*



Fig. 2  
Photograph: Sirit  
Former Army and Navy Hall with banner  
RSFR (Russian Socialist Federal Republic),  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

On 25 October 1917, the day of the Russian Revolution in Saint Petersburg<sup>1</sup>, the world held its breath. An enormous empire was plummeting from its old, outdated frame-autocratic czarism-into a new orbit. Peasants and workers now dined in the Winter Palace. In the field of art too there was only a brief bourgeois interlude. From the religious culture of the icon, art moved on to the Great Abstraction essentially without further detour. The fact that, in the winter of 1915, Ivan Puni and his companions called their last futurist exhibition of paintings "0.10" is evidence of revolutionary stamina. They embraced a consciousness of time and speed that outpaced even politics. Back from Paris after the outbreak of World War I, the avant-garde had already turned the art scene of Saint Petersburg and beyond on its head with "Tramway V", its first futurist exhibition of paintings in the spring of 1915. Russian futurism, which grew out of literature, cubism, and folk art and later evolved into agitprop, suprematism, and ultimately constructivism, did in fact last longer than a single heroic year. Along with its Italian counterpart and international dadaism, it represented the most radical answer to the senselessness of the war and the end of the system that had perpetrated it.

"0.10" marked a new beginning: art after the zero point. It was the first step in a new epoch, in which art stood above politics in the chain of command. As the flood of contemporary newspaper articles shows, the cultural elite of the city perceived this rupture immediately and recognized in the new visual language the vocabulary of the new epoch.

Even Anatoli Lunacharski, the future commissioner for public education a well-read man and friend of Puni's family who had been educated in Paris recognized the potential of these revolutionary iconoclasts early on (as Lenin had the mass effect of film). He managed to mobilize the avant-garde in the service of society for the very first May Day celebration in 1918 and the first

<sup>1</sup> After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 Saint Petersburg was renamed Petrograd. In 1924 the city was given the name Leningrad. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, in 1991 it was named Saint Petersburg again.



anniversary of the revolution. In this sense the breathtaking photographs from the collection of Ruth and Peter Herzog, memorial albums for Lunacharski by two photographers' collectives, which have never been published in their entirety, also bear witness to "0.10". This is especially the case with the photographs of the glorious first anniversary celebrations in Saint Petersburg. Even though no other decimal place would again radiate the glorious impact of the year 1918, and even though the newly introduced Gregorian calendar remained in effect, the advent of a new era was never so drastic, so palpable on the streets of the big cities as during the anniversary celebrations. The three hundred photographs collected in these two albums are not only a magnificent document; they are touching in their authenticity, in the world-historical dimension engraved within them. Procession and demonstration at the same time, a reversal of class relations, of above and below. They show the historical amazement of the masses, who suddenly find themselves in the limelight for the first time, having taken their history and their fate into their own hands. As such they are an adequate illustration for John Reed's classic *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

For this first epochal celebration, the people of Saint Petersburg decorated their city with garlands, sailors adorned their ships with flags, and electricians draped squares and buildings with strings of lights, illuminating Lenin's motto "Bolshevism is kolkhoz plus electricity". Most artists also took active part in this celebration, and so did Ivan Puni and his wife, Xana Boguslavskaya.

The scion of an upper-middle-class Italian family of musicians, educated at the Académie Julian in Paris, Puni not only used his intelligence to team up the brothers Vladimir Tatlin and Kazimir Malevich (who were already enemies at that point). His talents as an organizer and no doubt his financial background as well also made him the leading propagandist of a "New Art", as he himself postulated in 1919 in a programmatic series of four surviving paintings (fig. 4). Thus he



Fig. 3  
Anonymous photographer from the Petrograd  
Photography and Cinema Committee (FoKK)  
Demonstration on Uritski Square,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 4  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Nowoje Iskusstwo (New Art) (Variation 3)*, 1918–1919  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Fig. 5  
View of the middle tower of Nikolaev Station (now Moscow Station), Saint Petersburg, 1918  
In Vladimir Tolstoy, Irina Bibikova, and Catherine Cooke, eds., *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia, 1918–1933* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 79, plate 43



Fig. 6  
Typographical veiling of Paolo Trubetskoi's statue of Alexander III on Rebellion Square (Znamenskaya Square until 1918), Saint Petersburg, 1918. The top reads, "Art is one of the means to unite humanity."  
In Vladimir Tolstoy, Irina Bibikova, and Catherine Cooke, eds., *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia, 1918–1933* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 79, plate 42

was appointed professor at the SVOMAS (State Free Art Workshops—that is, the former Academy of Fine Arts), and he followed Marc Chagall to the art school in Vitebsk for a few months in early 1919. For the first anniversary he was also represented by monumental banners at Saint Petersburg's Liteini Prospekt and Okhtinski Bridge, as documented by seven surviving sketches and contemporary accounts.

These sketches form the intersection between the photographic and documentary prelude to our project on the one hand and, on the other, the most extensive presentation thus far of the artist's œuvre. In particular, Puni's carefree and virtuosic way of dealing with language—both words and individual letters, which he set dancing and whirling freely within the square of the picture-found application beyond the autonomous artwork, in the agitprop movement that began after the revolution, which artists also had to join in the context of the great literacy campaign. Thus, free "letter rhythms" fluttered on the squares of Petrograd on the occasion of the first anniversary celebrations (fig. 6), and at least in the renovated face of a station clock, one seems to recognize an "applied" Puni (fig. 5). As an art form and the veritable de-collage of the old system of language and words, lettrisme offers a striking contrast to the rising culture of the slogan, which not even the most outstanding linguistic acrobats and innovators, such as Vladimir Mayakovsky or Velimir Khlebnikov, resisted as propagandists of the revolution. Puni himself turned his talent for collages of word and image already tried and tested in 1915 to particular benefit in the renovation of the shop decorations for which Saint Petersburg and especially its Nevski Prospekt were famous. As early as 1867, the French art writer Théophile Gautier had spoken enthusiastically about them, and naturally the shop signs also fascinated Mayakovsky.<sup>2</sup> As John Bowlt – one of the greatest authorities on the art of the Russian avant-garde – explains in his well-

<sup>2</sup> Gautier's text can be found at the beginning of Alla K. Povelikhina and Evgenii Kovtun, *Das russische Reklameschild und die Künstler der Avantgarde* (Leningrad: Aurora, 1991). The same work also contains Mayakovsky's 1913 poem *To Shop Signs* (ibid., 132).



documented contribution to this catalogue, it was precisely the connection between word and image (and between literary and visual artists) that was decisive for the headlong transformation of the movement's formal vocabulary (fig. 7). Other publications, such as the catalogues for the Paris and Berlin retrospective in 1993, discuss the considerable influence that Puni also exerted on the Russian constructivism of Alexandr Rodchenko or El Lisitski (transfer stations on the journey to architecture) with his strongly sculptural, abstract reliefs of 1915, or – as Hubertus Gassner has shown in the catalogue for the exhibition “Dinge in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts”<sup>3</sup> – on the dominance and potency of the world of things in the early 1920s and the fetishization of “material”. The extent to which Puni's work may have been known to the Bauhaus through his solo exhibition at Herwarth Walden's Galerie Der Sturm in 1921 and through his participation in the first shows of Russian abstraction in the early Weimar republic requires further examination.

For Puni is unknown, at least to the wider public. And a fortunate coincidence was necessary to rescue his oeuvre from repression and hence from oblivion. It has certainly not yet been fully reconstructed, but its outlines have become visible and palpable due to the activity, the intuition, and most of all the passion of one collector: Herman Berninger. Upon our urging, this story of a passion, the novel of his life, is told for the first time in this publication by the collector himself, who has hitherto always kept modestly in the background.

On his colorful life's journey, the art lover Berninger – born in Innsbruck in 1911 and an internationally known dealer in raw cotton – chanced upon a small painting by a certain “Jean Pougny” in a Paris gallery in 1952. It held such fascination for him that, after its purchase, he wanted to meet the artist right away. Thus it came about that he entered the studio of an expatriate Russian, who had preserved his magic kingdom behind the

<sup>3</sup> Hubertus Gassner, *Die scheinbaren Dinge*, in *Dinge in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts*, exh. cat., Haus der Kunst, Munich (Göttingen: Steidl, 2000), 29–79.



Fig. 7  
Clipping from a Saint Petersburg newspaper with reproductions of works by Ivan Klyun, Olga Rosanova, and Ivan Puni's letter paintings *Hairdresser* and *Washing Windows* at the “Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings ‘0.10’”  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



threshold of his door, and above all made the acquaintance of his wife, Xana, with whom he maintained close ties even after Puni's death in 1956. He began to work with her on a catalogue of Puni's works, which would later be published in two volumes by Wasmuth in Tübingen in 1972 and 1992. In the course of the research necessary for the catalogue, more and more of the works of the Russian period between 1914 and 1920 resurfaced. Most of them had remained in Russia when the Puni, who were among the first dissidents to leave, fled to Berlin via Finland in the winter of 1919/1920. Berninger was now forced to rethink. For the first piece that he had acquired in 1952 established Jean Pougny as a cultivated painter of still lifes and genre scenes within a French tradition of painting. Moreover, he himself had already entered this tradition before evolving into a cubo-futurist, and Ilya Repin, the most important Russian painter of the late nineteenth century, had already confirmed it for his father on the basis of the early work. Not only did Puni earn his living with this extensive late work in a "French" style, which dates from 1924 until his death; he also received several prizes for it, including the Ordre de la Légion d'honneur. And he showed it in renowned institutions like the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and the Kunsthaus Zürich.

Already during his years in Berlin from 1920 to 1923, Puni had not only taken up themes of city life, but also furthered his conception of a "synthesis" of all previous styles through his still lifes, which tended towards Neue Sachlichkeit (New objectivity), as well as through the figure of the musician, in order to arrive at a new figuration. This process and its "results," such as the major work of these years, *Synthetischer Musiker* (Synthetic Musician) – celebrated at the "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung" of 1922 and widely published – have been extensively and convincingly analyzed by Eberhard Roters and Hubertus Gassner on the occasion of the return of that painting to Berlin (to the Berlinische Galerie).<sup>4</sup> However, neither the mysterious, dark *Selbst-*

*porträt vor dem Spiegel* (Self-Portrait at the Mirror, p. 177), based on a gouache sketch from 1921, which has also resurfaced, nor the city scenes with a black marketeer or a pool player (p. 174) foreshadow the French painting style. In their patterns of composition they originate instead from configurations tested in Russia. It is only in ephemeral works – such as an announcement for the Sturm soiree or a cubist still life, which already in 1921 associates an accordion player (p. 182) with the French word bal (ball) – that the casual personal style and earthy coloring that, particularly after 1930, characterize Puni's work so emphatically and place him in the proximity of Henri Matisse or Edouard Vuillard, become visible. (One should not, however, underestimate the early Russian style of Mikhail Vrubel as well as Puni's own deep inclination towards the material and the decorative.)

After 1990, in the wake of perestroika – after most of the catalogue raisonné had been assembled – the many acquaintances that Berninger had made with Russian artists and collectors in the interim paved the way for new discoveries. While they do not change our fundamental picture of Puni's work, they do complete and decisively extend it, especially with respect to the Russian period. Over the last decades Herman Berninger not only succeeded in tracking down a major work like *Synthetischer Musiker* in Denmark. Over the course of fifteen years, relying on various sources, he also found examples of Puni's shop decorations. In the wake of the agitprop doctrine, the painter (whether ordered to do so or on request) had furnished shops with these decorations in order to replace "capitalist trademarks" with professional emblems.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Puni, Eberhard Roters, and Hubertus Gassner, *Ivan Puni: Synthetischer Musiker*, ed. Helmut Geisert, Elizabeth Moortgat, and Martina Jura (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1992), 14–70, 70–105.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Claude Marcadé, "Lavage des fenêtres," in Jean-Louis Andral, Jean-Claude Marcadé, and Marie-Anne Chambost, eds., *Jean Pougny, 1892–1956*, exh. cat., Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Berlinische Galerie, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1993), 126. See also the contemporary accounts of the removal of the old signboards in Povelikhina and Kovtun, *Das russische Reklameschild und die Künstler der Avantgarde* (note 1), 191 ff.



Already in 1999 paintings with playing card motifs from the series "New Art" could be shown in the last room, dedicated to Puni, of an exhibition of constructivists in the Kunsthaus Zurich (fig. 8). In the meantime, a larger group of related "shop signboards" (or rather shop decorations) have found their way into Berninger's collection. United for the first time in an exhibition and a catalogue, they are now being presented to a wider audience. "This aspect of his total oeuvre, which so far art historians have treated only marginally," Berninger says, "needs further scholarly analysis. The Puni exhibition at the Museum Jean Tinguely in Basel will be a welcome impulse for specialists to do further research in this area."

With few exceptions, the collector did not undertake these latest acquisitions with our exhibition in mind. But they are among the reasons why, after 1993 and 1999, Puni is now being honored on a larger scale, which includes his late work, and in connection with an homage to his collector, expert, and author of his Catalogue raisonné.

It was a spontaneous decision that came like a bolt from the blue, when Heinz Stahlhut (the director of this project), Andres Pardey, and I knocked at Berninger's door in early summer of last year to ask him for loans of some of Puni's works for our exhibition "Jean le Jeune". Out of the dialogue of four reliefs and one painting by Puni with Jean Tinguely's "Reliefs polychromes", "Blanc sur blancs" and "Reliefs sonores", we conceived the wish for a more valid presentation, one that would include the collector. Even earlier, a meeting with Gidon Kremer had led me into the new rooms of the Ruth and Peter Herzog Foundation. I will never forget how the Baltic violinist lost himself in the newly acquired albums as if he were studying a new score. Instantaneously recognizing the importance of this "find", all that was needed was the obvious combinatorial inspiration to forge a project from this convergence of three passions.

In the context of the Basel festival "Les Muséiques", which combines music with museum art, Gidon



Fig. 8  
Ivan Puni room in the exhibition "Chagall, Kandinski, Malewitsch und die Russische Avantgarde", Kunsthaus Zurich (29 January 1999 to 25 April 1999), with works by Ivan Puni from the Herman Berninger collection

Fig. 9  
Herman Berninger (center) with Heinz Stahlhut, Guido Magnaguagno and Andres Pardey (from left to right), of the Museum Jean Tinguely Basel in Berninger's Zurich flat, spring 2002



Kremer and his "Kremerata Baltica", together with the soprano Julia Korpacheva, now supply the prelude to "0.10" with works by Alexandr Raskatov, Leonid Desyatnikov, and Chaikovsky. This is a fortunate coincidence, which the stars appear to have held in store for these months.

In addition to the stars, we also thank all of the real participants; the comprehensive genius of the musician Gidon Kremer, who may – who knows? – have derived some nourishment from the musical Puni family; the organizational manager of the festival, Roland Rasi, and all those who assisted him; the collectors Herman Berninger and Ruth and Peter Herzog, who are so similar in their imperturbable and generous manner, as well as Prof. Dr. Jörn Merkert, director of the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin; Dr. R.M. Mason, Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva; Dr. E.J. van Straaten, director of the Stichting Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; Dr. Alfred Pacquement, director of the CNAC/MNAM Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Dr. Christoph Becker, director of the Kunsthaus Zurich, for their generous loans.

Thanks also go to the graphic designer Werner Jeker, Lausanne, for the striking design of the exhibition's printed material and website; to the Benteli Verlag, Bern, with Mrs. Christine Flechtner; to Mr. Till Schaap and Mr. Arturo Andreani for editing and printing the catalogue; to the numerous translators for their valuable help.

Christian Baur in Basel photographed many of Puni's works as well as the reconstructions of the exhibition walls from Galerie Der Sturm; Ruedi Habegger in Basel prepared the photographs from the Fondation Herzog collection. Our thanks to both of them for their efforts, as well as to the team from Kraft ELS AG, Basel, under Josy Kraft, for transporting the works; Silvia Mesmer Tarchini and Ramiro Fonti for framing and hanging them; and finally Bettina Mette, who handled publicity for our museum for the first time.

The English specialist John Bowlt, Professor of Slavic

Languages and Literatures at the University of Southern California and director of the Institute of Modern Russian Culture there, is the author of the main contribution on Ivan Puni and has tapped for us several contemporary reports on Puni/Pougny. Professor Heiko Haumann of the Historisches Seminar and Andreas Guski of the Slawisches Seminar at the Universität Basel as well as the photography collector Peter Herzog himself have commendably examined the two albums for the first time and appraised their historical status and photographic quality. At our own institution, Heinz Stahlhut, as manager of the exhibition, has been responsible for the catalogue and the project – he has supervised both with great care and meticulous precision. He has also contributed an essay on the 1922 graphic portfolio "Iwan Puni (Ivan Pougny) Acht Linoleumschnitte" (Eight linocuts), in which these Berlin works are discussed in depth for the first time.

Saint Petersburg will celebrate its three hundredth birthday in 2003. In the company of Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin, Ivan Puni will return to his hometown in several exhibitions, and photographs of the revolution will bear witness to the greatest historical event in the proud and cruel history of that city. Art is celebrating in a European cultural capital. And Russian art is flourishing this spring in Basel.



**Biography**  
**Ivan Puni**  
**Jean Pougny**

**1892**

Birth of Ivan Albertovich Puni on 22 February in Kuokkala, a Finnish seaside resort in the province of Saint Petersburg.

His grandfather was the internationally renowned conductor and composer Cesare Pugni, whose symphonies and especially ballets are performed to this day. Born in Genoa in 1805, Pugni was appointed professor to the Conservatory of Milan at age twenty. From there he went on to the Paris Opéra and to a director's position at the Paganini Conservatory, then to London and finally to Saint Petersburg where, after 1850, he worked with the Imperial Theater until his death in 1870. Puni's father, Albert Puni, was born of an English mother in London in 1846. He was a cellist at the theatre in Saint Petersburg, where he married Lidia Lomakin, of the landed Russian aristocracy.

According to Madame Xana Pougny, widow of the artist, the correct birth date – among the many rumored – is 1892. Puni's passport, issued during the czarist epoch (fig. 10) gives his date of birth as 22 February 1890. This antedate resulted from legal necessities concerning the settlement of an inheritance.

**1900–1908**

Ivan Puni studies at the military college of Saint Petersburg. The prevailing atmosphere in his parents' house, which is frequently visited by Saint Petersburg's literary and artistic elite, has a profound influence on the boy. He begins to draw and manifest his interest in painting at an early age. Ilya Repin, a friend of the family, recognizes his talent and encourages him in these pursuits.

**1909**

His studies finished, Puni declines family suggestions to become an architect or an officer in the army and affirms his desire to pursue painting. He reaches an agreement with his father by which, in renouncing his mother's inheritance (she had died in 1904), Puni will receive regular pension installments. A studio is set up



Fig. 10  
Ivan Puni's passport, issued by the czarist government. Due to legal necessities concerning the settlement of an inheritance, his date of birth is given as 1890  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Fig. 11  
Yuri Annenkov  
*Portrait of Ivan Puni*, 1912  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



for Puni at 56, Bolshoi Prospect, at the corner of Gatchinskaya Street, in a building belonging to his father.

### 1910–1911

Attracted to French art, Puni leaves for Paris. During this first sojourn, he works at the Académie Julian initially, then in various private academies. He stays for a while at the Pension Gotron, rue des Fossés Saint-Jacques, then moves with his compatriot Yuri Annenkov (fig. 11) to 9, rue Campagne-Première. In the midst of the Parisian avant-garde, and especially the nascent fauvist and cubist movements, Puni receives his first aesthetic direction.

### 1912–1913

In February 1912 Puni leaves for Italy, the land of his ancestors, before returning in April to Saint Petersburg. There he is introduced into the Russian avant-garde by Dr. Nikolai Kulbin and participates in the Union of Youth exhibitions. In 1913, he marries Xana Boguslavskaya, and soon their studio becomes a meeting place for futurist poets and painters (fig. 39).

### 1914

As a result of a dispute in January with the organizers of an exhibition, Puni leaves the Union of Youth, taking with him several of its most active and innovative members. The institution then ceased to function. In February the painter and his wife arrive in Paris, where Puni exhibits his paintings for the first time at the Salon des Indépendants. They spend the spring months in Marseille and the month of July in Brussels. As war is imminent; they return to Saint Petersburg.

### 1915–1916

Despite quarrels and oppositions in the avant-garde, Puni succeeds in grouping his comrades around him and in organizing the first exhibition reflecting tendencies of the extreme avant-garde of the epoch, still unknown in Russia. the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 'Tramway V'" (fig. 16 and 18) opens on 3



Fig. 12  
Ivan Puni in military dress with  
a monkey, Saint Petersburg, 1906  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 13  
Ivan Puni (second row in the middle)  
with his family, Kuokkala, 1908  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 14  
Photograph of Xana Boguslavskaya  
in Ukrainian costume, 1911  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 15  
Ivan Puni and Xana Boguslavskaya's  
apartment house from 1916 to  
1920, Petrotsavodskaya Street 43,  
Saint Petersburg  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



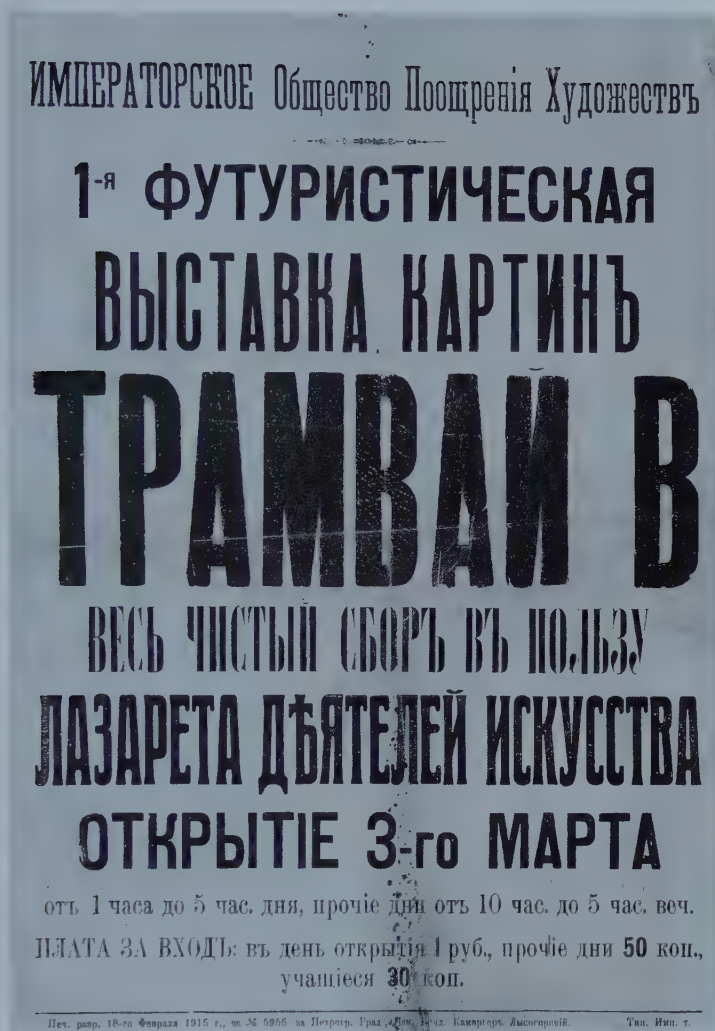


Fig. 16  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster for the opening of the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings  
'Tramway V'", 1915  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

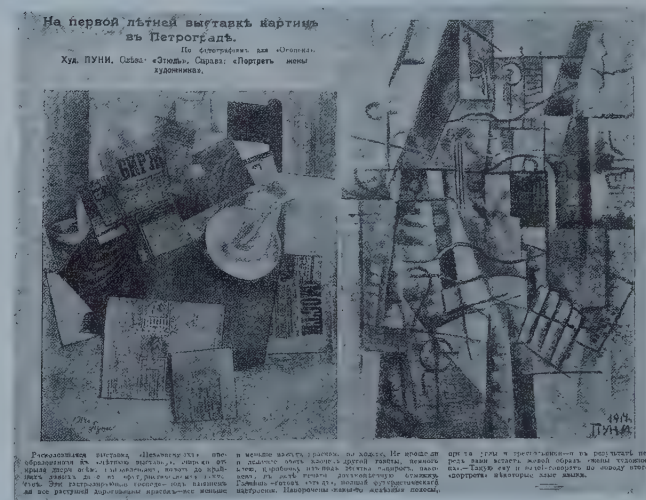
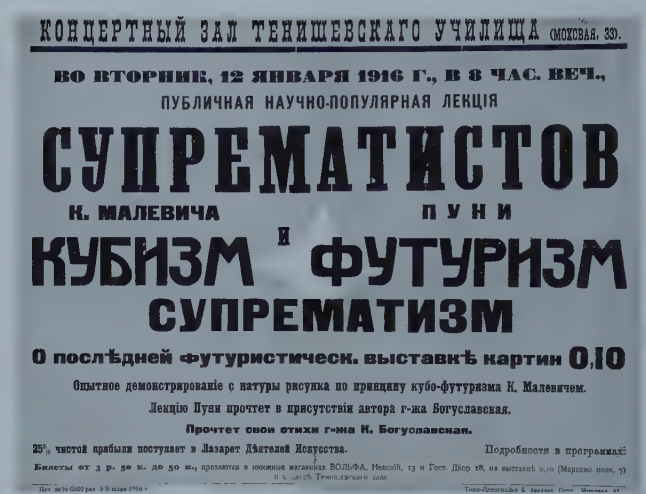


Fig. 17  
Small poster announcing a lecture by Kazimir Malevich and Ivan Puni on modern art, on the occasion of the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" on 12 January 1916, 1916  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 18  
Clipping from the journal *Ogonek* with reproductions of Ivan Puni's *Study* and *Portrait of the Artist's Wife* at the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 'Tramway V'", 1915  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



March 1915 in an exhibition hall of the Imperial Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, in Petrograd – a decisive date in the history of modern art in Russia. It unleashes numerous discussions and polemics in the media of the day.

Toward the end of 1915, Puni takes the initiative for a second “shock exhibition”, a difficult task in view of the growing antagonism between Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin. The “Last Exhibition of Futurist Paintings ‘0.10’” (fig. 1) runs from 19 December 1915 to 19 January 1916 in the rooms of the Dobychina Gallery in Petrograd. On that occasion Puni, Malevich, Boguslavskaya, Ivan Klyun, and Mikhail Menkov publish the Suprematist Manifesto. Once again, public reaction is divided, and critics deliver violent attacks. On 12 January 1916 Puni and Malevich organize a public discussion in favor of modern art in the concert hall of the Tenishev School in Petrograd (fig. 17 and p. 2), which incites passionate comment and violent reaction. In 1915 Puni exhibits a collection of ink drawings at the Dobychina Gallery.

Difficulties brought on by the war oblige Puni to accept an offer from Kornei Chukovski to collaborate on the magazine *Niva*, which publishes fairy tales for children, written and illustrated by the artist (fig. 19a and b). These tales are reprinted in a single volume in 1922, in Berlin. In the autumn of 1916 Puni is called up for military service.

## 1917

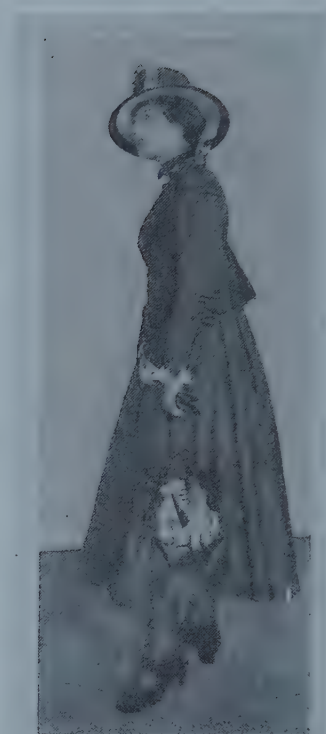
Puni returns to Kuokkala. The revolution breaks out. Anatoli Lunacharski, who supports the avant-garde, is named Commissar for Enlightenment.

## 1918

Puni designs a series of patriotic posters and street decorations for the Admiralty to commemorate the First of May (Labor Day) and the first anniversary of the Russian Revolution. In November he is named professor at the SVOMAS (State Free Art Workshops, that is, the former Academy of Fine Arts) in Petrograd.



Fig. 19 a und 19 b  
Ivan Puni  
Illustration for the fairy-tale *The Little Rabbit in the Cabbage Patch* and *The Drummer in the Enchanted Kingdom*, 1916  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Г-жа Богуславская на «вечеръ модъ». Костюмъ по рис. художника И. А. Пунин.  
Сним. А. Н. Павловича.

Fig. 20  
Illustration from the journal *Solntse Rossii*, no. 328/329 (May 1916), p. 13  
“Mrs. Boguslavskaya at a ‘fashion evening.’ Design by the artist I. Puni”





*Дирекция Kunstausstellung „Der Sturm“  
просит Васъ пожаловать на Верниссажъ  
выставки произведений художника*

*Ивана Пуни*

*30-го Января /2—6 час. дня.*

*Potsdamerstraße 134a.*

*Безплатно.  
И. Пуни.*

Fig. 21  
Ivan Puni in his studio, Berlin, 1921;  
behind the artist is the still unfinished  
painting *Synthetic Musician*, fig. p XXX  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 22  
Russian invitation to the exhibition  
“Ivan Puni” at the gallery Der Sturm,  
Berlin, February 1921  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

## 1919

Invited by Marc Chagall, Puni arrives in January at Vitebsk to teach at Chagall’s recently founded art school. In autumn, he returns to Petrograd, where the situation is deteriorating. At the end of the year, he leaves secretly for Finland.

## 1920

Suspect in the eyes of the White Russians, Puni and his wife are detained. They must wait until September to obtain an exit visa permitting passage to Danzig en route to Berlin.

## 1921

Puni sets up a studio in Berlin at Kleiststrasse 43 (fig. 21) and rapidly establishes contact with artists and writers in the German capital, including Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, Theo van Doesburg, and Rudolf Belling, as well as with fellow Russian émigrés. In February he has his first solo show at Herwarth Walden’s Galerie Der Sturm (figs. 22, 44, 45). To earn his living Puni draws illustrations for magazines and designs costumes and sets for theatres. He writes a book on modern art that is published two years later by L.D. Frenkel in Berlin (fig. 130).

## 1922

Puni exhibits at the “Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung”, in the Novembergruppe section. His famous painting the *Synthetic Musician* (now in the collection of the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin) is a synthesis of abstract and figurative elements; the painting incites passionate comment among the press and public (fig. 123 and 148). He is invited to exhibit at the “Erste Internationale Kunstausstellung” in Düsseldorf, where he gives a public lecture on modern art based on his book.

## 1923

In July he is invited by the Prague Opera to prepare, together with Boguslavskaya, costumes and sets for *Balladina*, a grand spectacle by a Polish poet.



1924

After several exploratory trips, Puni moves definitively to Paris and takes up residence at 51, rue Moulin Vert in the Montparnasse district. He adapts his name phonetically to the French language from Puni to Pougny. He befriends Louis Marcoussis, Gino Severini, Fernand Léger, Amédée Ozenfant, and the art critic Waldemar George. He executes designs for the Folies Bergère and for the costumier Granier. He contributes to the first "Salon des Tuileries".

1925

Pougny organizes an important individual exhibition at the Galerie Barbazanges, the catalogue for which contains a preface by André Salmon. He takes part again in the "Salon des Tuileries" and also in the "Salon d'Automne"; despite these successful showings, this period does not satisfy the painter, who begins seeking new forms of expression. On 15 August he moves to 10, rue du Couédic.

1926

On 12 March the Pougny's give a costume ball at the "Bal Alain", 14, rue de la Croix Nivert (15th arrondissement) for the socialites of Montparnasse and Montmartre (fig. 24). Pougny participates in several group exhibitions, one of which, at the Galerie Katia Granoff, in December, brings together a representative selection of his small format paintings. Pougny begins the summer sojourns to the French Riviera that will become an annual ritual. He there finds the source of inspiration for his numerous beach scenes.

1927

The artist completes a series of charcoal drawings and gouaches. He exhibits at different Salons and group showings.

1928

Pougny presents his works of the preceding year at the Galerie Bernheim-Darental. Pougny participates in the

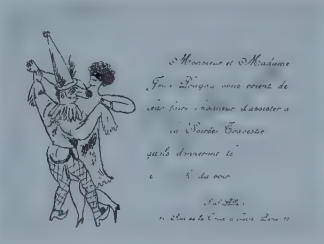
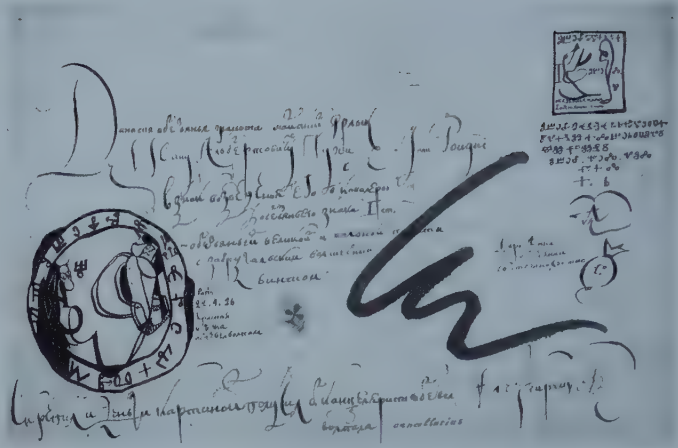


Fig. 23  
Alexei Mikhailovich Remizov  
Handmade document of Jean Pougny's acceptance in the "Order of Monkeys", Paris, 22 April 1926  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 24  
Invitation to a costume ball at the "Bal Alain", 12 May 1925  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 25  
Costume ball at the Académie Suédoise, Paris, 1920s; Xana and Jean Pougny are in the middle on the right  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 26  
Ivan Puni's French identity card, which already shows his Russian name adapted to French spelling as "Jean Pougny"  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Fig. 27  
Xana Boguslavskaya, circa 1925  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 28  
Jean Pougny and friends,  
Paris, 1939  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

"Exposition Internationale" at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels.

#### 1929

Several important collectors take interest in Pougny's work and make purchases. Since 1928 the painter is involved in research on his pictorial structure.

#### 1930

The gallery owner Aram Mouradian offers Pougny his first contract. The painter takes part in the Salons, for which he now makes regular contributions, and also participates in a group exhibition at the Galerie Zak. On 15 July he moves to 50, rue Vercingétorix.

#### 1931

Pougny shows at the Galerie Katia Granoff and at the Galerie Paul Rosenberg in group exhibitions.

#### 1932

With André Lanskoï and Filippo de Pisis, Jean Pougny exhibits at the Galerie L'Époque. Several of his paintings are also shown at the Galerie Mouradian-Vallotton, as well as at the Galerie Artistes Français, in Brussels.

#### 1933

Paul Guillaume organizes an exhibition for Jean Pougny at the Galerie Jeanne Castel, and writes the preface to the catalogue himself. This show is a great success and attracts the attention of the general public. On 5 April Pougny moves to 12-14, rue du Moulin de Beurre.

#### 1934

Pougny is grieved by the deaths of Mr. Castel and Paul Guillaume, who had supported his work. He continues to show at the Galerie Jeanne Castel in different group exhibitions that she organizes. He is invited to the Salon Temps présents at the Galerie Charpentier, where the selection of painting is made by the artist himself; he also participates in the "Salon de Noël" at the Galerie



Armand Drouant. At this point, Pougny begins to display the features of his later style.

### 1935

The painter moves to small formats, which permit him a greater concentration and intensity of expression. He exhibits again at the Salon "Temps présents" and in a group showing at the Galerie Jeanne Castel. On 15 July he moves to 8 bis, Villa Chavelot and installs his studio at 31, rue Jeanne.

### 1936

Pougny takes part in the "Peintres d'aujourd'hui" exhibition at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts and participates with several other contemporary artists selected for an exhibition at the Galerie Jacques Bernheim.

### 1937

Pougny exhibits three paintings at the "Exposition Internationale", in Paris, two of which are purchased by the Musée d'art moderne de Grenoble. He also exhibits at the "Salon des Jeunes Indépendants" and in other groups. On 15 October he moves to 55, Boulevard Saint Jacques and installs his studio at 1, rue Leclerc.

### 1938–1939

Pougny works intensively but, dissatisfied with himself, destroys numerous paintings before they are finished, thus he exhibits very little.

### 1940

In June, Pougny leaves for the south of France, accompanied by Robert Delaunay, and takes up residence in Antibes, at 11, cours Masséna, where he remains until May 1942. He exhibits in galleries along the Riviera, principally at the gallery l'Arte and the Galerie Sergy, in Cannes.

### 1942–1943

After returning to Paris, Louis Carré proposes participation in his group of artists. Pougny takes part in



Fig. 29  
Xana Boguslavskaya, Paris, 1928



Fig. 30  
Sabine Weiss  
Jean Pougny's studio,  
86, rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs,  
Paris, mid-1950s  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 31  
 Florence Henri  
 Jean Pougny, Paris, 1944  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

several group exhibitions at the Galerie Parvillée Galerie Pomone, organized by René Barotte, most notably "Cinquante ans de Dessin Français". On 20 December he moves his studio to 86, rue Notre-Dames-des-Champs. He has a solo show in October 1943 at the Galerie Louis Carré. The painting *Chaise et Fruit* is shown at the «Salon des Tuileries» and bought by the French government.

#### 1944–1945

Pougny continues to exhibit under Louis Carré's auspices at various group shows.

#### 1946

The UNESCO invites Pougny to its "Exposition internationale d'Art Moderne" at the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris. He participates in the exhibition "L'Art français contemporain" at the Musée national d'histoire et d'art du Luxembourg, as well as several group shows organized by the "Salon d'Automne" in Vienna and by the Cultural Relations Office in Cairo. He becomes a French citizen.

#### 1947

Pougny has a solo show at the Galerie de France; the catalogue contains a preface by Charles Estienne. He is made Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.

#### 1948

In the context of various group exhibitions in which he takes part, Pougny submits his *Harlequin with Violin*, one of his favorite motifs, to the exhibition organized at the Galerie Durand-Ruel for the Société des amateurs d'art et des collectionneurs under the name "Les Peintres et la Musique".

#### 1949

Invited by the Cultural Relations Office, Pougny participates in a series of exhibitions organized by the collector Meers that travel to major American museums for one year. He has his first solo show in New York at the



Knoedler Gallery, which had been showing selected works over the last year. He takes part in various group exhibitions such as "Tendances de l'Ecole de Paris" at the Galerie Gentilhommeière or "Présence de la Peinture" at the Galerie Beaune.

#### 1950

Pougny has two solo shows: at the Adams Brothers Gallery in London and at the Galerie de France in Paris, where his painting *Jardin* is purchased by the state (today located in the Musée d'Alger). Pougny submits one painting for the Carnegie Award Pittsburgh International and participates in several group exhibitions: at the Galerie Pascaud, in Orant at the group show "La Peinture Contemporaine" in London at the Leicester Gallery's "In Paris now", as well as in Denmark at the Charlottenborg Fonden's "Levende Farver". He exhibits at the Salon de l'enfance and at the "Jeunesse et famille" exhibition in Paris. The Royal Academy of London invites him to exhibit three paintings.



#### 1951

Pougny takes part in the "École de Paris" exhibition at the Coupole, in the "Le cirque" exhibition at the Galerie Pascaud, in the "Cafés et bistrots – Boîtes de nuit" exhibition at the Galerie Art Vivant, in the "Petits tableaux" exhibition at the Galerie Couleurs du Temps, as well as in the Menton Biennial and the usual Salons.

#### 1952

Pougny has another solo show at the Knoedler Gallery in New York. Herman Berninger gets to know the Pougny couple, a close friendship develops (fig. 33).

#### 1953

Pougny participates in a traveling international exhibition in Japan; in "Célébrités et Révélation de la peinture contemporaine" at the Musée Galiera; in the Menton Biennial; in the exhibition "Les peintres Temoins de leur Temps" (the theme was "Sunday"), and in the "Peintres contemporains" exhibition at the Musée d'Albi. He

Fig. 32  
Xana Boguslavskaya and friend in  
Pougny's studio, mid-fifties  
in Pougny's Atelier,

Fig. 33  
Jean Pougny and Herman Berninger in  
Pougny's studio, Paris, after 1952  
(Photograph: Xana Boguslavskaya)  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 34 und 37  
Herman Berninger and Xana Boguslavskaya in front of the Musée Toulouse-Lautrec on the occasion of the exhibition Pougny, Albi, France, 1958  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 35  
Eröffnung der Ausstellung "Jean Pougny" in der Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin 1961

Fig. 36  
Xana Boguslavskaya and Herman Berninger in the restaurant Les Maronniers, Montmartre, Paris, 1959  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 38  
Herman Berninger and members of the Agnelli family at the opening of the exhibition "Jean Pougny" in the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin, 1961

is guest of honor, along with Fernand Léger and Jean Puy, at the "France-Italy" exhibition in Turin. In November, he has a solo show at the Galerie Coard, in Paris.

#### 1954

Pougny takes part in the exhibition "La Demeure Joyeuse – Paule Marrot et les amis" at the Marsan Pavilion; in a group showing of watercolors at the Galerie Montmorency; in a group exhibition at the Palais de la Méditerranée, in Nice; in the exhibition "Le Palais du Luxembourg et ses Jardins"; in "La Joie de peindre" at the Galerie Art Vivant; as well as in exhibitions organized by the Galerie Charpentier ("École de Paris", "Le Pain et le Vin", "Plaisirs de la campagne").

#### 1955

Pougny exhibits abroad, in Holland and England. In France he exhibits in "Réalité et Poésie" at the Galerie Romanet, in "Couleur et Lumière" at the Galerie Montmorency, in "Évocation de l'Epoque héroïque" at the Galerie de l'Institut, and in "Ecole de Paris" at the Galerie Charpentier. The painter also participates in a traveling version of "Les Peintres Témoins de leurs Temps" and in the international exposition in Tokyo.

#### 1956

Pougny exhibits recent and older works at the Galerie Coard. He dies on December 28 in his studio at 86, rue Notre-Dames-des-Champs. He is buried in the cimetière du Montparnasse.

In the following decades Xana Boguslavskaya and Herman Berninger organize several retrospectives and draw up the two volumes of the Catalogue raisonnée (fig. 34–38).











# IVAN PUNI IN RUSSIA

Benedikt Lifshits

## Ivan Puni and Xana Boguslavskaya

The Punis, who had returned from Paris in 1913, had transferred the Montmartre *joie de vivre* and freedom of spirit to their attic on Gatchinskaya.

This was the Petersburg variant of Exter's house, only more "bohemian." We all used to visit the Punis: Khlebnikov, Mayakovski, Burlyuk, Matyushin, Severyanin. Xana Puni, witty, full of energy and palpable charm, soon became a focal point for the "budetlyane"<sup>1</sup>, who were tired of dragging out their rather uncomfortable existence.

After publishing *Roaring Parnassus* with her own funds, Xana assisted in the final organization of the Hylaea/Severyanin bloc. Her legs on the divan, she inspired the writers of the manifesto *Go to the Devil* not so much by her sarcastic comments as by her presence. We vied with one another in our attempts to please the enchanting publisher. Severyanin sacrificed Sologub to her and Mayakovski and I, Bryusov.

Kolya Burlyuk, always full of information gained from who knows what sources, assured me that, in the tail of this comet that had flared up so brightly in the "budetlyanin sky" (since *The Stranger* we saw all the tails of comets as the trains of women's dresses<sup>2</sup>), there remained, above the Seine, the star of Raymond Poincaré. This name impressed me less than that of his brother Henri, but still it gave a certain air of adventure to the rather enigmatic visage of Xana Puni. She was careful to conceal her past (which perhaps was hopelessly innocent). Whenever we dropped by, she was always splashing about in the bath like one of the Nereids. This caused the lover of classical analogies to adjustments) instead of the medieval train.

However, there would be no need to dwell on Xana Puni's personality in such detail, were it not for Khlebnikov, who was extremely fond of her. None of us was entirely indifferent to her, but the "King of Time" royally wasted his time, sitting for hours in the attic on

<sup>1</sup> "Budetlyane": futuro-slavs.

<sup>2</sup> *The stranger* is a poem of 1906 by Aleksandr Blok.



Gatchinskaya. I had no idea of the depth of his sentiment. I found out about it unexpectedly, and this is how:

Ivan Albertovich was a talented artist and a marvelous man. The friendly relations between us were in keeping with what at that time was called the "platonic adoration" of his wife. And most of us around her were smitten with it. Since I lived on the Petersburg Side, not far from the Punis, I often stopped by, especially after Ivan Albertovich began to do preparatory sketches for a portrait of me.

Indignant (or rather pretending to be indignant) at my unfuturist appearance, Xana put her black jabot round my neck and forbade me to appear anywhere at all without it, including the "Stray Dog"<sup>3</sup>. I got through several months wearing this goffered collar. It seemed no more terrible than the vampire lips and leprous Pierrot cheeks with which I, Lourié, and many others colored the unhealthy pallor of our faces before descending into the nocturnal cellar.

Khlebnikov regarded my jabot with fury, but I did not understand the meaning of his angry glares.

Once the three of us were gathered at the Punis – he, Kolya Burlyuk, and I. While I was sitting on the divan having a peaceful chat with Xana, Khlebnikov, who was standing at the other end of the room, picked up a big drawing knife from Puni's worktable and began to toss it from one hand to the other. And then he turned to me unexpectedly and said:

"Supposing I cut your throat?"

I was still wondering whether he was joking or really threatening me when Burlyuk rushed up to him and seized the drawing knife from him.

A painful moment ensued. Nobody ventured to break the silence first.

Suddenly and just as unexpectedly as he had uttered those words, Khlebnikov rushed up to the easel, which had a canvas on stretchers on it, armed himself with a brush, and with the speed of a prestidigitator set about



Fig. 39  
Ivan Puni's apartment house in  
Saint Petersburg from 1909 to 1916,  
Gatchinskaya Street  
(Photograph Xana Boguslavskaya 1962)

<sup>3</sup> The "Stray Dog" means the cabaret "Brodja tschaya Sobaka" in Saint Petersburg

# ПАСХА У ФУТУРИСТОВЪ.

Съ фот. И. Оцутъ.



Группа Петроградских футуристовъ въ мастерской художника Н. И. Кульбина.

Сидятъ: Н. И. Кульбинъ, О. В. Розанова, композиторъ Артуръ Лурье, поэтъ и художникъ В. В. Каменскій. Стоятъ: художникъ И. А. Пунинъ (устроитель выставки Трамвай В.) и поэтъ В. Маяковский; въ рукѣ у него портретъ художника Якулова.

## ПАСХАЛЬНЫЯ ПОЖЕЛАНІЯ.

1. Разумъ — каторжная цѣль для художника, а поэтому желаю всѣмъ художникамъ лишиться разума.

Художникъ К. Малевичъ.

2. Присоединяюсь.

Александръ Экстеръ.

3. Освобожденія отъ Варварскаго ига.

Артуръ Лурье.

4. Воскресенія.

Н. Кульбинъ.

5. Ужасно боюсь Пасхи: похриотсуюсь, — а вдругъ — Измайловъ?!

Поэтъ В. Маяковский.

6. Отчаянно люблю Пасху. — Он весной и куличная (а куличъ — вкус мудрецовъ) и, главное, можно цѣловаться даже съ незнакомыми. И еще — я родился на Пасхѣ.

Василій Каменскій.

Fig. 40

The article "Easter with the Futurists" from a Saint Petersburg newspaper with a photograph of Nikolai Kulbin's studio with Kulbin himself, Olga Rozanova, Arthur Lourié, Vassili Kamenski, Vladimir Mayakovski, and Ivan Puni, 1915  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



doing a portrait of Xana. He leapt about the tripod as if executing a dance of exorcism, changed brushes, and mixed paints and put them on the canvas with such force, one might have thought he had a chisel in his hand.

Between the three-dimensional Xana sitting next to me and her planar depiction in the process of being born over there by the window, there existed the invisible Xana of Khlebnikov's vision, which he was trying to seize before our very eyes. He blew out his nostrils and breathed in fits and starts, battling with the phantom that only he had seen, subjecting it to his will and with every brushstroke reasserting his supremacy over it.

For a Freudian, which I was then, the sexual nature of the creative act revealed itself beyond all doubt and refutation. I was intercepting the sublimation of the primal impulse at its very source. To tell the truth, at that moment sublimation ceased to exist for me.

At last, Velimir threw away the brush and sank down on the floor in exhaustion.

We went up to the easel, as if approaching a door that had just been unlocked.

We were confronted by a face quite reminiscent of Xana's. In its style the portrait was faintly reminiscent – toutes proportions gardées – of Renoir, but the absence of "volumes" (a result of the artist's inexperience or perhaps simply of his excessive haste) both flattered the features and imbued them with a shameless nudity. Leaving aside technique in the narrow sense of the word, I was seeing before me the hypostatized image of Khlebnikov's passion.

Velimir himself probably realized this, and to cover his unexpected nakedness, he overpainted the canvas with thick, black paint before we could come to our senses. And then, suddenly turning on his heel, he went out of the room.

In February the doctors sent the weak-chested Ivan Albertovitch to the south of France, and the Punis departed for Marseille. They only found out about the confiscation of *Roaring Parnassus* when they were already abroad.

From Benedikt Livshits *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer*, trans. John E. Bowlit (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research, 1977), 224–26.

Olga Rozanova  
**Letters to Alexei Kruchyonykh<sup>1</sup>**

December 1915

*My Automobile* and *Devil Panel* have been taken down. As it turned out [crossed out]. When the works were brought into the exhibition, my (paintings) proved more original (more novel) than Puni's. My relations with Oxana [Xenia Boguslavskaya] are strained to the limit. There's no tension between me and Ivan Albertovich [Puni], but Oxana is behaving like a stupid old bag. Apart from Malevich, there's absolutely no one on Puni's side. In the catalog Puni went as far as to sign himself "Manager." For reasons of tact not even [Levki] Zheverzheyev<sup>2</sup> did such a thing, but Oxana says that she has the right to order everyone around, since the exhibit is financed with their capital, etc. It's all very disgusting. Not worth writing about.

[January, 1916]

[. . .] The most disgusting aspect of the entire exhibition and of the artists themselves is that everything is being done on the sly. While it used to be that you just took looked after yourself, now what you do is to harm someone else no matter what. For example, Puni and his wife promised to make frames for me and then failed to do so on purpose, so that the paintings would look tattered. They distorted the catalog and a multitude of other things, so that even Malevich thought it was disgusting.

I never imagined that Oxana could be such a repulsive creature. Malevich is like their lackey. How long the

<sup>1</sup> These three extracts are from the correspondence between the painter Olga Vladimirovna Rozanova (1886–1918) and the poet Alexei Eliseyevich Kruchyonykh (1886–1968) in the archive of the Khardzhiev-Chaga Foundation, Amsterdam. Along with Ivan Klyun, Kazimir Malevich, Mikhail Menkov, and other avant-garde artists, Rozanova took part in the exhibition "0.10" (Petrograd, December 1915–January 1916) which was financed by Xenia Boguslavskaya and Ivan Puni. These letters are published in full in John Bowlit and Mark Konecny, eds., *A Legacy Regained: Nikolai Khardzhiev and the Russian Avant-Garde* (Saint Petersburg: Palace Editions, 2002), 223–24.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the businessman and patron, Levki Ivanovich Zheverzheyev (1881–1942). Zheverzheyev gave financial support to the Union of Youth society in Saint Petersburg of which both Puni and Rozanova were members.



organization will last depends on how long he remains satisfied with his "corner."

[1917]

It would be great if you had the time to gather up all the principles of your recent work and expound them theoretically. It's essential that you do this so that others don't come along and attribute your achievements to themselves. Puni, Malevich, and others. Oxana.

Don't take my words lightly: if Oxana writes verses, she will try – if only through the mouth of Ivan Albertovich – to elaborate their technical content, even if they may have none.

Last year on stage they spoke about the alogism of the new poetry, etc., and then Oxana proceeded to write verses. What is yours should belong first and foremost to you.

Send me your verses.

Kisses to you. Your O. Keep well.



Fig. 41  
Clipping from a Saint Petersburg newspaper  
with a photograph of works by Kazimir  
Malevich in the "Last Futurist Exhibition  
of Paintings '0.10'", 1915–1916  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 42  
Olga Rozanova, Xana Boguslavskaya,  
and Kazimir Malevich in the "Last Futurist  
Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 1915–1916  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Mstislav Dobuzhinski<sup>1</sup>

**Letter to Elizaveta Dobuzhinskaya**

Vitebsk, 20 Dezember 1918

When we next meet, I'll tell you about the comic appearance of the Puni-Boguslavskaya couple, their really impudent, if amazing, behavior, and their amazing activity. They shook everyone up, found some money for buying books, and then scrambled. I wanted to send a suitcase along with them – which I had already prepared and stuffed full of swedes, onions, and carrots, and I also wanted to send along some sugar, but it was too late – they had left early. I just couldn't miss the meeting of the Gubernatorial Section of People's Enlightenment so as to confirm our budget and confirm my appointment. So I sent [my husband] Dodya along to the station with candies and sugar. It turns out that at the station they were searched and were not allowed to take the sugar, although they did take the candies – so they'll be calling you. At least you'll be able to spoil yourself with just a few ounces.


*M. V. Dobuzhinskii: Pis'ma* [M. V. Dobuzhinski: Letters], ed. Gennadii Chugunov (Saint Petersburg: Bulanin, 2001, 151.



Fig. 43  
Iwan Puni  
*Balcony*, after a drawing of 1914/1915, 1958  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

<sup>1</sup> The artist Mstislav Valeryanovich Dobuzhinski (1875–1957) emigrated from Russia to Lithuania and then France and England. At the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 he was working in Vitebsk as Director of the Art-Practical Institute. The recipient of this letter, Elizaveta Osipovna Dobuzhinskaya (née Volkenshtein, 1874–1965), was Dobuzhinski's wife. She was living in Petrograd at this moment.





John E. Bowlt

**Transcending Reason**

The life and work of Ivan Albertovich Puni (later Jean Pougny, 1892–1956) have been the focus of important exhibitions and publications, and the Catalogue raisonné of his paintings, constructions, and drawings has been completed. His place in the pantheon of the Russian avant-garde is now assured.<sup>1</sup> Puni is remembered, of course, for his vital contribution to the development of cubo-futurism and suprematism, but he also deserves recognition for his dynamic role in the postrevolutionary Russian diaspora in Berlin, as well as for his later reprise of an intimate, contemplative style that has identified him as a member of the Ecole de Paris. Certainly no survey of the Russian avant-garde can be complete without copious reference to Puni's artistic experiments, his support of the legendary exhibitions "Tramway V" (Petrograd, 1915) and "0.10" (Petrograd, 1915–16), and the "plastische Gestaltung" (plastic form) that he created for his climactic exhibition at Galerie Der Sturm (Gallery of the journal Der Sturm) in Berlin in 1921.<sup>2</sup> But where does Puni's originality lie? How does he differ from colleagues and rivals such as Ivan Klyun, Kazimir Malevich, and Olga Rozanova? And what were his attitudes to the vexed questions of his time – the future of abstract painting as an idiom, the possibility of a synthesis of the arts, and, not least, whether radical art was a necessary counterpart to radical politics?

To answer these questions the investigator is bound to turn to the key manifesto that Puni and his wife, the artist Xenia (Xana) Leonidovna Boguslavskaya

<sup>1</sup> The main sources of information on Puni are Herman Berninger and Jean-Albert Cartier, *Pougny: Jean Pougny (Iwan Puni), 1892–1956: Catalogue de l'œuvre, 2 vols.* (Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 1972–92); Eberhard Roters, and Hubertus Gassner, *Iwan Puni. Synthetischer Musiker*, ed. Helmut Geisert, Elizabeth Moortgat, and Martina Jura (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1992); Jean-Louis Andral, Jean-Claude Marcadé, and Marie-Anne Chambost, eds., *Jean Pougny, 1892–1956*, exh. cat., Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Berlinische Galerie, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to El Lisitski's "puppet portfolio", *Die plastische Gestaltung der elektro-mechanischen Schau "Sieg über die Sonne"* (Hanover: Rob. Leunis und Chapman, 1923). It is tempting to speculate that Puni's design for his solo exhibition at Galerie Der Sturm in 1921 may have inspired Lisitski's Proun Room of 1923.

(1892–1972), printed and distributed at the “0.10” exhibition in December 1915.<sup>3</sup> Obscure in its meaning but provocative in its (non)sense, the joint untitled declaration is a document that helps us to appreciate why Puni moved from cubism to suprematism and then to agit-prop in the wake of the October Revolution. Inasmuch as its theses play an important role in this essay, let us quote the manifesto in full:

1. An object is the sum of real units, a sum that has a utilitarian purpose.

(Utility is the purpose of the sum of real elements to depict something.

Example: a certain sum of elements is a stone, another a man, etc.)

The substance of an object (reality) and the being of an object like a chair, a samovar, a house, etc., are not the same thing.

A. Freedom of the object from meaning, the destruction of utility.

B. A painting is a new conception of abstracted real elements, deprived of meaning.

3.  $2 \times 2$  is anything you like, but not four.

C. (The aesthetic thing in itself.)

An object (a world) freed from meaning disintegrates into real elements—the foundation of art.

B. 2 The correlation of elements discovered and revealed in a painting is a new reality, the departure point for a new painting.<sup>4</sup>

The proposition that “[a] painting is a new conception of abstracted real elements, deprived of meaning” may well be regarded as the common denominator of Puni’s artistic experiments. Not only are paradox and non sequitur key devices in his own aesthetic arsenal. Much

of the visual, literary, theatrical, and musical activity of the avant-garde as a whole was informed by similar principles: by the philosophical concepts of logic, logos, and the “meaning of meaning,” and the view that conventional language is a complex of external labels having little to do with the substance of the things to which they refer. As if to illustrate his theses Puni contributed twenty-two works to “0.10”, including *Man in a Bowler Hat* (present whereabouts unknown), which according to Ivan Klyun had a “fork poked into one eye [...] as a protest and struggle against logic and common sense.”<sup>5</sup>

Indeed the postulates of the Puni-Boguslavskaya manifesto evoke a range of associations with Russia’s “banquet years.” For example the deduction “ $2 \times 2$  is anything you like, but not four” (also reflected in the erratic number and letter sequences of the very scheme of the manifesto) recalls Fyodor Dostoevski’s *Notes from Underground*, whose hero made a similar claim: “Two times two makes four seems to me simply a piece of insolence. [...] Two times two makes five is sometimes also a very charming thing.”<sup>6</sup> More topically Puni’s paradox is consonant with the “numbers game” that Russian avant-garde artists played with abandon in their literary, pictorial, and ideological productions. Kazimir Malevich’s composition *Arithmetic* (1913), for example, with its free distribution of digits and equals signs, seems to encapsulate a higher or “transrational” mathematics.<sup>7</sup> Several years later El Lisitski scattered false formulae across his abstract compositions, known as Prouns. The poet Velimir Khlebnikov, whom Puni read and respected, engaged in an outwardly sophisticated, but essentially futile, computation of historical and future events, while the Symbolist poet and philosopher Andrei Beli, son of the arithmo-

<sup>3</sup> That Boguslavskaya and Puni distributed the manifesto at “0.10” emerges clearly from Boris Lopatin’s review of the exhibition from December 1915, entitled “Futurizm-suprematizm” and reprinted in Berninger and Cartier, *Pougny* (note 1), 1:52.

<sup>4</sup> The untitled manifesto, signed by Puni and Boguslavskaya, was printed by the Svet Typography in Petrograd in 1915. It is reproduced in Berninger and Cartier, *Pougny* (note 1), 1:52. The fact that the name of the corporation, Svet (light), appears at the end of this opaque manifesto is an unintended irony that must have appealed to Puni’s sense of humor.

<sup>5</sup> *Ivan Vasil’evich Kliun, Moi put’ v iskusstve: vospominaniia, stat’i, dnevniki*, ed. Andrei Sarab’ianov (Moscow: Russkii avangard, 1999), 90.

<sup>6</sup> Fyodor Dostoevski, “*Notes from Underground*” and “*The Grand Inquisitor*,” trans. Ralph E. Matlaw (New York: Dutton, 1960), pt. I, sec. V, 30.

<sup>7</sup> Malevich used *Arithmetic* as a lithographic illustration for Alexei Kruchionikh’s booklet *Vozroptshchem* (Saint Petersburg: EUY, 1913), where it appeared between the cover and the first page.





Fig. 44 and 45  
Exhibition Ivan Puni at the Galerie Der Sturm, Berlin, February 1921  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





logist Boris Bugaev, used idiosyncratic numerological systems to analyze works of literature.<sup>8</sup>

There are also echoes of the postulate that “2 x 2 is anything you like, but not four” in the major public manifestations of the avant garde, for they often presented their exercises in the irreconcilable, the incoherent, and the unconventional in exhibitions or publications with “formulaic” or “numerological” titles. Indeed, Puni and Boguslavskaya issued their manifesto at an exhibition called “0.10”, which was the first public display of suprematism. They did so, moreover, just two years after Velimir Khlebnikov, Alexei Kruchonykh, and Elena Guro had published their booklet *Troye* (Three), with illustrations by Malevich, and one year after Mikhail Larionov’s *No. 4*, to which Larionov had contributed nonobjective paintings in a style called “Rayist.” In 1918 Kharkov witnessed the birth of “7 x 3”, one of the most radical groups in the Ukraine, led by Vasili Ermilov and Maria Sinyakova. Similarly in the following year Tiflis (Tbilisi) became home to “H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>”, the Russo-Georgian counterpart to dadaism in Europe. And in Moscow in 1921 a group of five artists (Alexandra Exter, Lyubov Popova, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, and Aleksandr Vesnin) organized the exhibition “5 x 5 = 25”, at which they showed their “last” paintings before moving on to the applied arts and design.

Implicit in the Puni-Boguslavskaya manifesto—especially the dictum that “the substance of an object (reality) and the being of an object [. . .] are not the same thing” and the assertion of the “[f]reedom of the object from meaning, the destruction of utility” — is a reference to the linguistic debates of the cubo-futurists and their elaboration of *zaum* (literally “trans-sense” or “transrational”). Like their Italian counterparts the Russians wished to emancipate the word from its narrative and didactic constraints and even, unlike the Italians, from all national and political commitments. For the poets

Alexei Kruchonykh and Ilya Zdanevich, for example, the word was a neutral piece of technical material like paint, a musical note, or a lump of clay, and they kneaded it to coincide with their deepest emotional and psychological impulses. Kruchonykh, in particular, regarded verbal and graphic signs as abstract, formal quantities that could be composed and decomposed, combined and separated just as a structural engineer might investigate the various properties of metals in his search for the perfect machine — an analogy suggested by the titles of Kruchonykh’s major theoretical tracts, *The Word as Such*, *Texture of the Word*, and *Shiftology of the Word*.<sup>9</sup> Kruchonykh and his colleagues also made playful use of the properties of script, typeface, and font to show off their visual and phonic repertoire in a kind of variety show, replete with all manner of tricks, numbers, and positions. The results, as in actual variety shows, were often brilliant displays of verbal pyrotechnics and visual acrobatics, which are reminiscent of Puni’s own book illustrations (e.g., those he did for *Futurist: Rykayushchi Parnas* [Futurists: Roaring Parnassus] of 1914, fig. 46), algebraic masterpieces such as *Flight of Forms*, and the installation for his show at Galerie Der Sturm (fig. 44 and 45).

Puni shares with Russian poets such as Khlebnikov and Kruchonykh a common desire to use the canvas or the printed page to record as well as release images and sounds. The painting or page becomes a runway for verbal takeoff and only occasionally for landing; the return flight of the image or sound in question-controlled, confirmed, and on course — was of little interest to the avant-garde. This is the basic message of the *Flight of Forms*. Andrei Beli seems to have had this phonic transubstantiation in mind when he wrote his complex treatise on “glossology” (1922), in which there “[emerges] out of articulatory relationships [...] an entire cos-

<sup>8</sup> For example see his *Masterstvo Gogolia: Issledovanie* (Moscow and Lenin-grad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1934).

<sup>9</sup> Alexei Kruchonykh and Velimir Khlebnikov, *Slovo kak takovoe* (Moscow: Kuz'min and Dolinski, 1913); *Faktura slova: Deklaratsiia* (Moscow: Moskovskaia Assotsiatsiia Futuristov, 1923); and *Sdvigologiiia russkogo stikha: traktat obizhal'nyi (traktat obizhal'nyi i pouchal'nyi)* (Moscow: Moskovskaia Assotsiatsiia Futuristov, 1923).

mogony of sound.”<sup>10</sup> Beli suggested that human sounds derived from physiological stimuli; they were fashioned, he argued, by the body itself in its attempt to recapture the organic wholeness and divine totality that had reigned in the Garden of Eden before the Fall brought about their disintegration: “The gestures of sound are composed: by the contact of the tongue and the spiral of the [air] stream.”<sup>11</sup> Perhaps, suggests Beli, that is why the Russian word for “palate” (nyobo) is etymologically the same as that for sky or heaven (nebo). Indeed one of the most enticing arguments of Beli’s glossology is that the sound and letter “O,” the sound of pain and pleasure, is at once an iconographic reflection of the open mouth and a hieroglyph for the sun (the ultimate destination of all sounds), and that this microcosm of the great macrocosm is also contained within the dominant vowel of the Russian word for sun, solntse (cf. soleil, sol, sole, Sonne). Presumably Beli would also have felt that the emphatic presence of “O” in the related words for head (golova), voice (golos), throat (gorlo), nose (nos), eye (oko), mouth (rot), brain (mozg), and face (litso) was further evidence of the connection between our physiological structure and verbal journeys – or flights of form – through the solar system.

Like other symbolists, Beli was convinced that the words and sounds of man and beast had lost their primal meaning and function beneath the onslaught of civilization and its false categories. The poets of Russian cubo-futurism – among them Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh, Vasilisk Gnedov, and Ilya Zdanevich – explored this assumption further. Puni seems to have been drawn to Khlebnikov in particular (he painted his portrait in 1917 (fig. 48) and dedicated his 1923 monograph on contemporary painting to him, (fig. 130)<sup>12</sup>

because the poet would have agreed that the “substance of an object (reality) and the being of an object like a chair, a samovar, a house, etc., are not the same thing.” Khlebnikov invented a language, or rather a repertoire, of linguistic “melodies,” a system of communication that depended on shamanistic speech, numerological (dis)orders, children’s babbling, and even synesthesia (Khlebnikov wrote a verbal mimesis of Vladimir Burlyuk’s portrait of Benedikt Livshits),<sup>13</sup> as well as on traditional grammar and syntax. In resorting to these devices, Khlebnikov hoped to evoke an absolute or transcendental language whose mission was to reconnect man and God – just as the witch doctor uses his expressive medium to enable common mortals to hear the voice of the gods. Although these theurgic connections are missing in Puni’s paintings and writings – unlike Malevich, who styled himself a religious prophet, Puni seems to have been an agnostic – his experiments with letters and language bring to mind the explorations of his poetical comrades.

By undermining semantic conventions and exposing the original substance of the word, Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh sought to realize objectives very similar to those that Puni pursued in the visual arts, in such paintings as *BANI* (Baths), (1915, p. 64), and *Letters* (1919; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris) and especially in the oil and gouache versions of *Flight of Forms* (also called *Still Life with Letters*, 1919; State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg; Museum of Modern Art, New York). The echo of the repeated “mmm” in *Flight of Forms* (fig. 47) reminds us that sound and its production held an important place in Puni’s life. His father was a professional cellist, his grandfather a celebrated composer, and his half sister a musicologist and an accomplished violinist and cellist; his cousin Leontina was a dancer, while he himself played the violin, which features repeatedly as a subject of his pictures. Moreover when he placed letters on the canvas – sometimes at

10 Andrei Belyi, *Glossolalia: Poema o zvuke* (Berlin: Epokha, 1922), 119, quoted in Gerald Janeczek, *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde Visual Experiments, 1900–1930* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), 56.

11 Belyi, *Glossolalia* (note 10), 58.

12 Ivan Puni, *Sovremennaia zhivopis'* (Berlin: L. D. Frenkel, 1923).

13 Vladimir Burlyuk’s portrait of Benedikt Livshits (1913), until recently in the collection of Ella Freidus, New York, is now in another private collection.



random and sometimes by design – Puni was proceeding like a composer, who distributes notes on a musical staff or improvises at a keyboard to create a musical score. The results may be out of tune, unharmonious, and discordant, but for Puni the aural effect of the canvas is often just as important as the visual one – as the critic Voldemar Matveis (Vladimir Markov) has noted in his discussion of *faktura* (faktura), the texture of a painting is the Kammerton of the surface.<sup>14</sup> Thus with a painting like *Flight of Forms* we listen as well as look. In scattering letters across his paintings Puni also broke with the traditional left-to-right and top-to-bottom orientation of Western writing to create a blend of words and phonemes, shapes and images as effervescent and exotic as the cocktails he liked to mix.<sup>15</sup>

As a declaration of intent, however rhetorical, the Puni-Boguslavskaya manifesto found ready precedents in the principal assertions of the Russian cubo-futurist poets. For example, in their 1913 text *The Word as Such* Khlebnikov and Kruchyonykh declared, “we do not think that language should be a language.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly in *The Letter as Such* they extended their ideas to media other than literature, including the visual arts. It is as if they were referring to Puni and his pictorial manipulation of letters when they write: “Handwriting, once transformed in its own peculiar manner by mood, conveys that mood to the reader, independently of the words. Similarly, we ought to raise the issue of signs that are written, visual, or simply tactile as if made by the hand of a blind person. Understandably, the word-smith does not also have to be the writer of the handwritten book; actually, it would be better if he were to



Fig. 46  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Illustration from the journal *Roaring Parnassus*:  
“Susanna and the Elders”, 1914  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

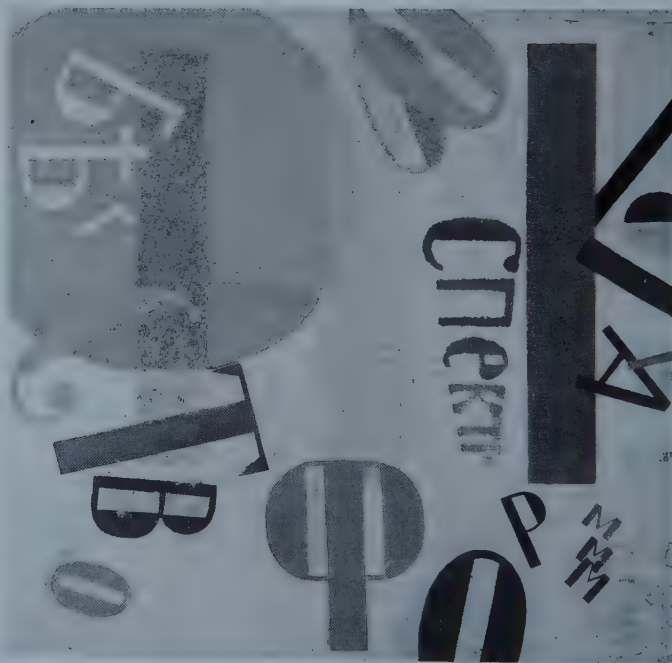


Fig. 47  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Flight of Forms*, 1919  
Oil on canvas, 124 x 127 cm  
State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg

<sup>14</sup> Vladimir Markov, *Printsipy tvorchestva v plastike: Faktura* (Saint Petersburg: Union of Youth, 1914), 69.

<sup>15</sup> According to Gotthard Jedlicka, “Jean Pougny used to mix his own cocktails”; see Gotthard Jedlicka, *Jean Pougny*, in *Pougny*, exh. cat., Kunsthhaus Zürich, (Zurich: Kunsthhaus Zürich, 1960), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Alexei Kruchyonykh and Velimir Khlebnikov, *Slovo kak takovoe*, in V. N. Terekhina and A. P. Zimenkov, eds., *Russkii futurizm: teoriia, praktika, kritika, vospominaniia* (Moscow: Nasledie, 1999), 46.



Fig. 48  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Khlebnikov reads to Xana, 1917  
20 x 17 cm  
Indian ink on paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

entrust this to the artist.”<sup>17</sup> In the following year Kruchyonykh also affirmed in his *Declaration of the Word as Such* that the “artist is free to express himself not only through a common language (concepts), but also through a private one (the creator is an individual) that has no specific meaning.”<sup>18</sup>

Puni’s view that the real “meaning” of a word—or for that matter any artifact—may be independent of the utilitarian meaning imposed on it by society is also implicit in Kruchyonykh’s composite declaration *New Ways of the Word*, which he published in *Troye* in 1913: “The word (and the sounds of which it consists) is not only an idea in brief, not only a form of logic, but is principally [something] transrational (the irrational, mystical, and aesthetic parts).”<sup>19</sup> Just as Puni maintained that “[a] painting is a new conception of abstracted real elements, deprived of meaning,” so Kruchyonykh announced that he had written “three poems in my own language, [whose] words have no definite meaning.”<sup>20</sup> Of course Puni could have pointed to many examples of the “word as such” outside the work of Khlebnikov and Kruchyonykh. Living in Paris in 1910–1911, he was well aware of cubist collage, appliqué, and lettrisme, and some of his soberer paintings, such as *Accordion* (1914; State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg) and *Chair and Hatbox* (1917–1918; private collection), pay homage to those methods. The Italian futurists’ “parole in libertà” were clearly an important stimulus as well, but Puni also looked closely at domestic sources (Russian fairy-tales and games, an interrupted telephone conversation, a drunken brawl, even a public debate that proceeded in broken phrases, swallowed words, stuttering, fragments, and arguments at cross-purposes). Such bizarre verbal behavior was typical of

17 Alexei Kruchionikh, *Bukva kak takovaia* (1913), in Terekhina and Zimenkov, *Russkii futurizm* (note 16), 49.

18 Alexei Kruchionikh, *Deklaratsiia slova kak takovogo* (originally in A. Kruchionikh et al., *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov* [Petrograd: Svirel’, 1914]), in Terekhina and Zimenkov, *Russkii futurizm* (note 16), 45.

19 Alexei Kruchionikh, *Novye puti slova* (1913), in Terekhina and Zimenkov, *Russkii futurizm* (note 16), 50.

20 Alexei Kruchionikh, *Pomada* (Moscow: Kuz’mín and Dolinski, 1913), unpaginated.



the cubo-futurist meetings, at which the audience “just couldn’t fathom where zaum ended and madness began.”<sup>21</sup>

One of the important sources for Puni’s linguistic and semantic experimentation was the Russian store signboard. These profane icons gracing the streets and squares of prerevolutionary Russia were intended to function as unpretentious commercial messages informing the passerby of a product or ware. Tailors, bakers, butchers, haberdashers, and grocers commissioned signboard painters to paint the commercial logos and advertisements for their establishments – a man in a top hat for the tailor, a joint of beef for the butcher, an elaborate pretzel for the baker. Avant-garde artists like Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, Kazimir Malevich, and Aleksandr Shevchenko were captivated by the simplicity, forthrightness, and vitality of these signs, which they both collected and paraphrased.<sup>22</sup> They regarded the signboard painter as an important member of the “primitive” community, together with the child, the savage, and the Sunday painter, and they even contended that their favorite signboard painter, the Georgian Niko Piroshmanashvili, was the “Oriental” counterpart to Henri Rousseau le Douanier.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in the Target exhibition of 1913 they included children’s drawings (from Shevchenko’s collection), local signboards (David Burlyuk owned a vast collection), and twenty anonymous amateur paintings alongside primitive works of their own like *The Seasons* (Larionov) and *Morning in the Country after a Snow-*

*storm* (Malevich), as if to demonstrate that there was no essential difference between “high” and “low,” the mainstream and the margin.

Puni shared his colleagues’ enthusiasm, and he was well aware of their activities. Unlike them, however, he seems to have studied the signboard not for its bright colors and ingenuous forms, but rather for its play of rudimentary letters, phonemes, and morphemes. With its integration of text and image the signboard functioned in the same way as a comic strip, an Orthodox icon, or a “lubok” (hand-colored print), using verbal truncation, abbreviation, approximation, and even aberration to convey a message that was often imprecise, ambiguous, and misleading. As he contemplated the signboards Puni must have wondered whether the word *miaso* (meat), for example, was meant to signify the painted joint of meat or meat in general, or what would happen if the signboard for bread were affixed to a greengrocery or if the word “cow” were printed above a head of sugar.<sup>24</sup> He seems to have had such inconsistencies in mind when he wrote the word *gaz* (gas) beside a saw and a piece of glass (*Relief with a Saw*, 1916/1920–1921; p. 61) or painted the word *bani* (baths, bathhouse) in a context where it had no apparent reference beyond the ironic anagrammatic allusion to “nabi” (the Nabis).

*Washing Windows* (1915, p. 55) is especially relevant in this context, inasmuch as it takes its inspiration – as well as the injunction to “Eat Lactobacillae” – from advertisements that Puni saw in a neighborhood pharmacy.<sup>25</sup> “Someone’s portrait” (in the words of one reviewer),<sup>26</sup> it was included in 0.10 together with *Hairdresser* (1915; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, fig. 7) and other signs “deprived of meaning,” and thus

21 Benedikt Livshits, *Polutoraglaznyi strelets* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo pisatelei, 1933), 172.

22 For information on the signboard and avant-garde artists see Alla Povelikhina and Evgeni Kovtun, *Russian Painted Shop Signs and Avant-Garde Artists* (Leningrad: Aurora, 1991). For a general discussion of late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban folklore, including signboards, see Iakov Rivosh, *Vremia i veshchi: ocherki po istorii material'noi kul'tury v Rossii nachala XX veka* (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1990).

23 For information on Piroshmanashvili see for example Kirill Zdanevich, *Niko Piroshmanashvili* (Tbilisi: Izdatel'stvo Sabchota Sakartvelo, 1965); G. Bua-chidze, *Piroshmani ili progulka olenia* (Tbilisi: Khelovneba, 1981); and *Niko Piroshmanashvili, Niko Piroshmani, 1862–1918*, ed. Erast Kuznetsov (Leningrad: Aurora, 1983).

24 As a matter of fact Malevich wrote the word *tailor* on one of his representations of a fishmonger’s signboard. For an illustration, see Jean-Claude Marcadé, ed., *Malévitch, 1878–1978: Actes du colloque international tenu au Centre Pompidou, Musée National d’Art Moderne, les 4 et 5 mai 1978* (Lausanne: L’âge d’homme, 1979), 74.

25 Berninger and Cartier, *Pougny* (note 1), 1:65.

26 Igor Grabar’, *O skuchizme* (originally in *Den'*, 12 January 1916), in Berninger and Cartier, *Pougny* (note 1), 1:74.

served as a practical extension of the manifesto. The same “joyous disruption of common sense”<sup>27</sup> is present in Puni’s costumes for the “ballet lettriste” that was scheduled for the soiree at Galerie Der Sturm in Berlin in March 1921 (p. 170/171), which was to consist of moving signboards advertising his solo exhibition.<sup>28</sup> But Puni was not only interested in the signboard because of its linguistic playfulness and synthetic density (its conjunction of text and image). He also seems to have regarded it with nostalgia, as the vestige of a fast receding urban folklore, which may explain his recurrent depiction of signboards showing boots, clocks, keys, and so on, in Petrograd and Vitebsk in the late 1910s. Other artists working in Petrograd and Moscow – like Mstislav Dobuzhinski, Konstantin Dydysenko, and Boris Kustodiyev – displayed a similar emotional attachment to Old Russia in their own depictions and transformations of traditional signboards. Paintings like *Baths* and *Washing Windows* are compelling illustrations of Puni’s aspiration to remove “utility” from “meaning”: by transferring the verbal signifier to a perverse or nondescript context (neither the words nor the images in *Hairdresser*, for example, contain any reference to barbers or barbershops), Puni emancipated words and letters from their conventional associations, undermined or destroyed their “meaning,” and, within this newfound freedom, amplified their primary quality, sound. In this way we both see and hear the picture, not, of course, in the same way that we do with the synesthesia of symbolists like Aleksandr Blok, Vasili Kandinski, and Arthur Rimbaud, but rather as formal exercises in concrete poetry.

Puni’s special attitude towards language was not only driven by the desire to disengage grammar and syntax from sound and “meaning.” He also sought to liberate letters and images from their conventional settings and

place them in incongruous contexts, as he does for example with the pincers and red ball in *Relief with Pincers* (1915; fig. 49 and p. 56) or the hammer attached to a sheet of red cardboard in *Relief with Hammer* (1914/1920/21; p. 57). In both visual and conceptual terms these assemblages compel the viewer to reinterpret and revise the concept in question (e.g., that of a hammer), to substitute absurdity for utility, and to construct a new and viable context for the elements. This condition is central to transrational masterpieces such as *Ball of Fools* (1914; Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York) and *Flight of Forms* as well as to the contemporaneous suprematist paintings of Malevich, to which the artist often gave enigmatic subtitles (e.g., *Red Square: Painterly Realism of a Peasant Woman in Two Dimensions* [1915; State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg]).

How then did Puni, with his semantic anarchy and art “deprived of meaning,” respond to the politicized language, agitational propaganda, and ideological engagement of the October Revolution? If, like many of his colleagues, he welcomed the prospect of a freer social structure with guarantees of basic, democratic human rights, he must, nonetheless, have wondered whether these lofty ideals justified the violence, physical suffering, and economic chaos of the revolution and the civil war. The fact that he did not emigrate immediately, that he collaborated with the Soviet government on various levels as artist, administrator, and pedagogue, and that he helped to “revisualize” Saint Petersburg with political slogans, billboards, banners, posters, and books might seem to indicate that he supported the Bolshevik cause. However, the more we study Puni’s involvement with Soviet Russia (he and Boguslavskaya left for Finland at the end of 1919), the more we realize that his position vis-à-vis the new regime was antagonistic rather than supportive, pragmatic rather than ideological. His contributions to Lenin’s Plan of Monumental Propaganda are a case in point.

The Party Decree “On the Dismantling of Monuments

27 Jean-Claude Marcadé, *Lavage des fenêtres*, in Andral, Marcadé, and Chambost, *Jean Pougny, 1892–1956* (note 1), 151.

28 See for example the costumed figures bearing the letters Vy and K, for Vy[stav]k[a] (exhibition), reproduced in Berninger and Cartier, *Pougny* (note 1), 1:134.



Erected in Honor of the Czars and Their Servants and on the Formulation of Projects of Monuments to the Russian Socialist Revolution" was published on 14 April 1914. Lenin's basic idea was to enhance the May Day festivities and the observance of the first anniversary of the October Revolution not only with processions, flags, banners, and bunting, but also with the construction of statues and busts to heroes of progressive culture such as Beethoven, Ferdinand Lassalle, Marx, and Voltaire. Anatoli Lunacharski, who attended the unveilings of many of these monuments (fig. 51), found the idea "fortunate and profoundly exciting,"<sup>29</sup> and both the festivities in general and the Plan in particular attracted numerous artists, actors, and musicians, served as rallying points for political speeches, and naturally promoted the message of international Communism through bold imagery and simple slogans. In accordance with the Plan, many czarist monuments were destroyed or concealed, as can be seen in the 1918 photograph of the equestrian statue of Nicholas I on Mariinski Square (fig. 107). Lenin saw to it that statues, theatrical presentations, propaganda boards, and other examples of agitational propaganda were documented in black and white photographs, commissioning special agencies for the purpose. The Petrograd festivities, for example, were the responsibility of the Photo-Department of the Cinematographic Section of the Central Bureau for the Organization of the Festivities of the October Revolution in Petrograd. Most of the photographs were taken by Viktor Bulla who worked for this Department. His father Karl Bulla left a large stock of negative to the Museum of the Revolution in 1917. The albums in the Fondation Herzog collection, with their numerous photographs of streets, squares, canals, crowds, statues, and performances, derive from those negatives.

In Petrograd the strategic points were Nevski Prospect, the Field of Mars, Insurrection Square, Uritski Square,

the Admiralty, Liteini (Foundry) Prospect, and the factory areas on Vasilyevski Island and the Petrograd Side. Documentary photographs of Petrograd like those in the Fondation Herzog collection reveal just how diverse and elaborate the decorations were, how many people participated, and how dramatically the streets and squares changed as a result. They did not, however, always change for the better, as evidenced by Viktor Sinayski's awkward and overbearing bust of Lassalle on Nevski Prospect (fig. 50). Among the first of the new monuments was Aleksandr Matveyev's plaster statue of Karl Marx in front of the Smolni Institute, unveiled by Lunacharski on 7 November 1918 (fig. 51 and p. 89). However, it displeased Lenin with its simplified, almost cubist forms, and it was soon dismantled. By contrast, Natan Altman's designs for Uritski Square and his Alexander Column – both for the first jubilee of the October Revolution – were original and powerful. The Fondation Herzog collection contains several shots of the Column (e.g., p. 90/91) as well as a photograph (p. 90) of his original watercolor for the Square (now in the Museum of the History of Saint Petersburg).

Not all the artists who contributed to Lenin's Plan of Monumental Propaganda were leftist or radical, however, and the Fondation Herzog collection reminds us that agitprop was not necessarily synonymous with the avant-garde. In fact, most of the flags, banners, and boards depicted in the documentary photographs of meetings and processions are couched in a thoroughly realist and narrative style. Boris Kustodiyev's banners representing various *métiers* (tailor, baker, reaper, cobbler, etc.), which graced Oruzheinaya (Armory) Square on 7 November 1918, are a case in point. They look more like logos for upscale boutiques than they do like rough and ready propaganda (fig. 52 to fig. 55). It is also important to remember that the artists who were commissioned to help with the Plan of Monumental Propaganda – and these included Puni – received financial compensation or expanded food rations in exchange for their efforts. Involvement therefore meant money and sustenance at a time of shortages and great physi-

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Igor Grabar', "Aktual'nye zadachi sovetskoi skul'ptury," *Iskusstvo* (Moscow and Leningrad), nos. 1–2 (1933): 155.



Fig. 49  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Relief with Pincers*, 1915  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

cal hardship. Thus material advantage rather than ideological conviction may well explain Puni's "political" activities of 1917–1920: his drawings for Vladimir Mayakovski's folio *Geroi i zhertvy revolyutsii* (Heroes and victims of the revolution) in 1918; his professorship at the restructured Academy of Arts, which had adopted "an extremely formalist direction";<sup>30</sup> his cover for Lunacharski's weekly journal *Plamya* (Flame); his design for the seal of the Soviet of People's Commissars in 1919; his vociferous (albeit oblique) lead article for the journal *Iskusstvo kommuny* (Art of the commune) in the same year; his collaboration with the State Porcelain Factory;<sup>31</sup> and the "enormous posters, slogans, and placards" for May Day and the First October Anniversary that he "executed in the halls of the Winter Palace."<sup>32</sup> Those of Puni's projects that have survived are brightly colored, highly schematic, and quaint combinations of the abstract and the narrative, which often incorporate subjects and motifs from his earlier experimental works, such as a pair of pincers, a hammer, and a saw.

While Puni may not have been especially convinced of the ideological validity of the Plan of Monumental Propaganda, it provided him with the opportunity to extend his studio art into a public forum. On a certain level agitprop must have appealed to him because of its theatrical format and function: the street became the stage, the passersby the audience, the facades and fences the carriers of designs, and the political slogans the text. What Puni did, then, was transfer his suprematist compositions to a performative space. He established a creative interaction between the object (e.g., a pro-

<sup>30</sup> Anna Petrovna Ostroumova-Lebedeva, *Avtobiograficheskie zapiski*, comp. Natal'ia Priimak (Moscow: Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo, 1974), 3:75.

<sup>31</sup> It is reported that Boguslavskaya and Puni worked in the State Porcelain Factory in L. Andreeva et al., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo pervykh let oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii* (Moscow: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1967), 25.

<sup>32</sup> Boguslavskaya to Yuri Annenkov, 11 September 1963, Yuri Annenkov, *Dnevnik moikh vstrech. tsikl tragedii* (New York: Mezhdunarodnoe literaturnoe sodruzhestvo, 1966), 2:128. Puni and his colleagues also designed and made banners and placards in the Smolni Institute. See Fondation Herzog, Photo Nos. 247, 737, 918, and 920.



paganda board or poster) and the viewer and thereby endowed them with a utilitarian dimension. It is clear from the many references to acting, the theater, and dancing in Puni's paintings and drawings – including his cycle of illustrations for Nikolai Yevreinov's *Theater for Itself* in 1915–1916<sup>33</sup> – that he was an enthusiast of the theater as an artistic medium. Everything suggests, then, that he was poised to move from the plane to the proscenium and to export his formal experiments into an interactive environment, in which color and abstract form became ancillary to the spirit and message of the revolutionary drama. Puni's shift of emphasis from the aesthetic to the useful lay at the heart of his 1919 declaration *The Creativity of Life*, in which he writes that a "chair will be more beautiful if it is made according to the principle of constructive usefulness."<sup>34</sup>

Puni received several commissions for street decoration. The most important of these were his decoration of the Okhtinski Bridge, his contribution to the designs for Liteini (Foundry) Prospect (fig. 96 to fig. 99), and his poster *Workers and Soldiers*, all of 1918.<sup>35</sup> Unlike Boguslavskaya, who "decorated buildings with huge, non-objective boards,"<sup>36</sup> Puni resorted to figures, vehicles, and accessible symbols of revolution (workers, soldiers, factories, and rifles) to render Petrograd "bright and festive."<sup>37</sup> This is true, for example, of his anniversary panel *Armed Workers in a Car* (fig. 98) for Liteini Prospect, which shows "black silhouettes of armed



Fig. 50  
Sirit  
Lassalle memorial by Viktor Sinaiski on  
Nevski Prospect, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

<sup>33</sup> For information on these illustrations, which were not published at the time, see Elena Zhukova, *Les dessins de Pougny pour le livre de Nikolai Evreinov Le Théâtre pour soi*, in Andral, Marcadé, and Chambost, *Jean Pougny, 1892–1956* (note 1), 153–55.

<sup>34</sup> Ivan Puni, *Tvorchestvo zhizni*, *Iskusstvo kommuny*, no. 5 (5 January 1919): 1.

<sup>35</sup> For color reproductions of five of Puni's agitprop designs, now in the State Russian Museum in Saint Petersburg, see Andral, Marcadé, and Chambost, *Jean Pougny, 1892–1956* (note 1), 182–83. For black and white photographs of two designs, now lost, called *Sailors and Peasants*, see Berninger and Cartier, *Pougny* (note 1), 1:103. Galushina mentions that Puni designed a poster called *Workers and Soldiers* in E. A. Speranskaia et al., eds., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo pervykh let Oktiabria: Materialy i issledovaniia* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1971), 36.

<sup>36</sup> Speranskaia et al., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 35), 37.

<sup>37</sup> Andreeva et al., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 31), 18.



Fig. 51  
Viktor Bulla  
Dedication of Alexander Matveev's  
statue of Karl Marx in the presence of  
Anatoli Lunacharski (fourth from left),  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

individuals with red flags sitting in an automobile, hanging, as it were, in an airless space."<sup>38</sup> As evidenced by their red, yellow, and orange designs, Puni and his immediate colleagues – Natan Altman, Vladimir Kozlinski, Vladimir Lebedev, and David Shterenberg – shared this vivid conception, which naturally cannot be conveyed by the black and white documentary photographs. Kozlinski's anniversary panel RSFSR, also for the Okhtinski Bridge (near the Smolni Institute), is a case in point. The design for it (State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg) presents white letters on a red plane superimposed on a black diagonal, a contrast that cannot be appreciated from the surviving photograph.<sup>39</sup>

Although Puni produced a number of drawings in 1917–1920 that interpreted the events of October—drawings like *Revolution* (p. 172) and *Uprising in the Factories* (p. 173) – his formal contributions to the Plan of Monumental Propaganda were modest, consisting of boards for Liteini Prospect and the Okhtinski Bridge and the poster *Workers and Soldiers*. According to the list of decorative assignments published in the newspaper *Severnaya kommuna* on 23 October 1918, Puni bore responsibility for the Okhtinski Bridge segment,<sup>40</sup> although it is difficult to ascertain whether all designs were implemented and where they were ultimately displayed. One documentary photograph, for example, shows the panel *Armed Workers in an Automobile* in place on Liteini Prospect, but commentators continue to associate the design with the Okhtinski Bridge.<sup>41</sup>

If Puni placed his art in the service of politics more for material than for ideological reasons, how did he adjust

<sup>38</sup> Speranskaia et al., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 35), 37. This particular design is variously described as intended for Liteini Prospect and the Okhtinski Bridge. Judging from the surviving documentary photograph, however, Puni produced the design for Liteini Prospect.

<sup>39</sup> For a color reproduction of Kozlinski's design, which was clearly inspired by Puni, see Vladimir Tolstoi, ed., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo: oformlenie prazdnestv* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1984), plate 64.

<sup>40</sup> The list is reprinted in Tolstoi, *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 39), 1:59.

<sup>41</sup> See Andreeva et al., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 31), 47. Galushina, however, writes that *Armed Workers in an Automobile* was intended for the Okhtinski Bridge (Speranskaia et al., *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* [note 35], 36).



these new assignments to his particular aesthetic system? Confronted with the peculiar physical circumstances that attended the placement and exhibition of agitprop art (the street, the canal, and public transport, as the Fondation Herzog collection demonstrates so graphically), Puni and his colleagues drew upon their rich experience in theatrical design, in audience response at debates and exhibitions, and in the writing and publication of manifestoes that were often as enigmatic and rhetorical as the slogans of Lenin's government. But however uplifting these slogans may have been – "He Who Does Not Work Does Not Eat," for example, or "Peace to the Huts, War to the Palaces" – Puni must have been struck by their impracticability and ultimate absurdity, as well as by the same kind of incongruity and ambiguity of word and image that he associated with the signboard. He must have been delighted to see that his prerevolutionary "dada" compositions (such as his reliefs with hammer, pincers, and red ball) anticipated the Communist "nonsense" of hammer and sickle. Moreover the (mis)application of the gigantic advertisements for equality, fraternity, and democracy to the haughty palaces, banks, and chancelleries of old Imperial Russia must have seemed to him bizarre indeed: what had been the institutional symbols of autocracy were now literally the bearers of freedom's message. Such a perverse transvaluation of values and meanings must have appealed to Puni's sense of humor.

That Puni could not, in the end, accept the revolution and its noble aspirations is demonstrated by the fact that he chose to emigrate, escaping from the Soviets by crossing the ice to Finland at the end of 1919. It was clearly not material discomfort, but the irreconcilable conflict of Soviet word and meaning, of predetermined program and spontaneous artistic gesture, that troubled Puni and made him decide to emigrate. He rejected a finite ideology in order to maintain an individual right to linguistic and artistic experiment and caprice, a right that he exercised in Berlin in 1921 when he designed and decorated the rooms for his one-man exhibi-

tion at Galerie Der Sturm. Puni was extremely sensitive to external constraints, and in 1918–1919 he no doubt felt the mounting intolerance of the Soviet regime. He also seems to have associated abstract art and suprematism in particular with a lack of emotional and psychological plasticity. In his article *Creativity of Life* (1919) he reacted strongly against the call for art to be applied merely as a cosmetic device.<sup>42</sup> Indeed Puni seems to have connected the political intolerance of the Soviets with the artistic intolerance of the suprematists, criticizing Malevich and the doctrine of abstraction in his 1922 lecture at Berlin's Haus der Künste. It is possible, then, that Puni returned to a more figurative style and "humanized his paintings"<sup>43</sup> in order to escape from what he regarded as a vogue for abstract art and hence as an expression of convention and routine.

For all his outward affability, Puni is a solitary figure within the context of the Russian avant-garde. He contributed to the same exhibitions, frequented the same circles (e.g., "Apartment No. 5"),<sup>44</sup> supported the same ideas, and endured the same influences as Klyun, Malevich, Rozanova, and Vladimir Tatlin. However, he refused to forge an exclusive alliance with any of them, and he was a jealous guardian of his own artistic individuality, always ready to move on as soon as an idea or movement became canonical. In the view of some of his colleagues, like Klyun and Malevich, his attitude sprang from misunderstanding and disloyalty.<sup>45</sup> Others

<sup>42</sup> Puni, *Tvorchestvo zhizni*, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Roger V. Gindertael, *Pougny, 1894–1956*, in Roger V. Gindertael, ed., *Pougny* (Geneva: P. Cailler, 1957), 14.

<sup>44</sup> "Apartment No. 5" belonged to Lev Bruni's family in Petrograd, and it was an important rendezvous for the avant-garde in 1914–15. In addition to Bruni himself, Ivan Klyun, Pyotr Miturich, Puni, Nikolai Punin, Olga Rozanova, and Nadezhda Udaltsova were among the regular visitors. See Nikolai Punin, *Kvartira No. 5, Panorama iskusstv* 12 (1989): 162–98.

<sup>45</sup> Klyun maintained that Puni had not understood the meaning and potential of suprematism, and he claimed that it was for this reason that Puni dismissed the movement and returned to a more Realist style. See Klyun, 103 and 271.

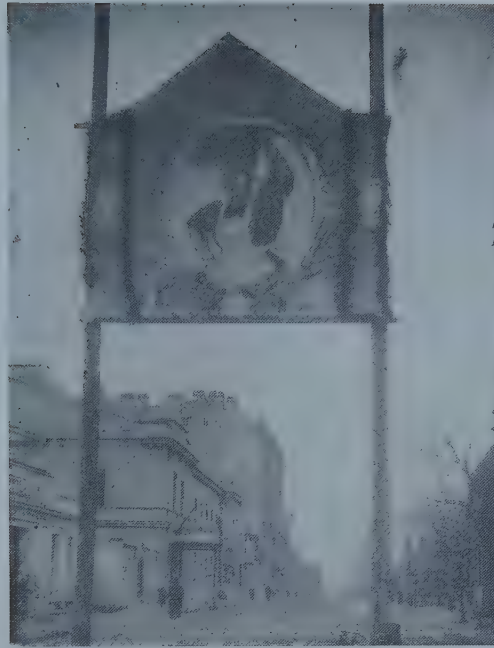


Fig. 52 to 55

Utechin

Boris M. Kustodiev's banners *The Vegetable Dealer*, *The Baker*, *The Tailor*, and *The Carpenter* in Oruzheinnnaia Square, Saint Petersburg, 1918

Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



blamed his assertive wife,<sup>46</sup> while still others, Mayakovski among them, regarded his posture as a provocative affront.<sup>47</sup> But Puni's isolation was also a positive phenomenon, as Pyotr Miturich suggested when he included his colleague in the "Group of Russian Creative Forces That Might Inculcate a New Sense of the World into Soviet Civilization."<sup>48</sup> Above all it was Puni's constant dissatisfaction with the status quo and his exploration of potential alternatives that caused him to reject suprematism and abstract painting in general and to rediscover "painting as such" in his new figuration of the Paris period. This becomes clear in his correspondence with the critic Nikolai Punin, his friend and supporter in Saint Petersburg. Now an émigré in Berlin and Paris, but hardly nostalgic for his Russian exploits, Puni justified his stylistic volte-face in these letters, explaining in terse and earnest terms why he had advanced from the geometric to the narrative. The new declaration is poignant – it operates with a very different language from the manifesto of "0.10", but it is informed by a similar enthusiasm and commitment:

"I have bidden farewell to non-objective art, i.e., I am not renouncing it as a form of 'analytical' art, but I just don't see a future for myself in this art, and I feel that synthetic art does not lie there. Interesting that I can put up with simple non-objective paintings, but if they are in the slightest complex, they become decorative, like a carpet. I've been doing some naturalistic pieces rather like what I was doing before but better. I had the feeling that, even though they integrated construction and objective motivation, artists still didn't satisfy me.

So [. . .] I reached the conclusion that we did not use to break up the subject just so that we could put it back together again; that in any case the only Realism is the Realism of painting; and that however I present the object, I shall still not come closer to it. At the same time I saw that deformation, for example, is not purely negative, but that it can create an aesthetic and positive "remnant" that is missing or latent in naturalistic, constructive works. Inasmuch as art is, generally speaking, the effort to work out a manifest sense of measure, the deformation and the reconstituted object are not the same. [...] If contemporary naturalism is the reconstitution of the object after long experiments [. . .] then I think it's time to put the individual, i.e., the artist, back together again."<sup>49</sup>

Ensconced in Paris in 1924 on, Puni dedicated his artistic efforts to seeking – and finding – that new synthesis.

46 Boguslavskaya seems to have caused much ill feeling because of her haughty, if not abrasive, manner. See for example Olga Rozanova's letters to Alexei Kruchionikh in John Bowlit and Mark Konechnii, eds., *A Legacy Regained: Nikolai Khardzhiev and the Russian Avant-Garde* (Saint Petersburg: Palace Editions, 2002), 222–24.

47 The tension between Vladimir Mayakovski and Puni is attested by Nikolai Otsup's group photograph of Easter 1915, in which Mayakovski is about to hit Puni's cut-out head – pasted in from another photograph – with his clenched fist. The photograph is reproduced in Berninger and Cartier, *Pougny* (note 1), 1:49.

48 Piotr Miturich, untitled essay (ca. 1941), in idem, *Zapiski surovogo realista epokhi avangarda: dnevniki, pis'ma, vospominaniia, stat'i*, ed. Mai Miturich, Vasilii Rakitin, and Andrei Sarab'ianov (Moscow: RA, 1997), 118.

49 Ivan Puni to Nikolai Punin, Berlin, 1922, *Nikolai Punin, Mir svetel liubov'iu: dnevniki, pis'ma*, ed. Leonid Zykov (Moscow: Artist, Rezhissior, Teatr., 2000), 150.





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Interior at Kuokkala*, 1910, 43 x 41 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on Pavatex  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Walk in the Sun*, 1912, 79 x 62 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Washing Windows*, 1915, 85 x 67 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Relief with Pincers*, 1915, 55 x 32 x 9 cm, wooden washboard, iron pincers, red ball  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Still Life: Relief with Hammer*, 1914–1921, 80.5 x 65.5 x 9 cm, gouache and hammer on cardboard  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni

*Model for "Sculpture (Berninger/Cartier 109)"*, 1915, 30.5 x 20.5 x 5.5 cm, wood, cardboard, sheet iron, gouache

Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni

*Model for "Pictorial Sculpture (Berninger/Cartier 102)"*, 1915, 30 x 21 x 1.2 cm, wood, cardboard, sheet iron, wire, gouache

Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pictorial Sculpture*, 1915, 73 x 40 x 8 cm, wood, cardboard, collage, gouache  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Model for "Sculpture (Berninger/Cartier 106)"*, 1915, 36.7 x 23.7 x 7.9 cm, wood, cardboard, sheet iron, plexiglas, wire, gouache  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Model for "Sculpture (Berninger/Cartier 111)"*, 1915, 36 x 26.2 x 6 cm, wood, cardboard, gouache, oil  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Relief with Saw*, 1915–1920, 76 x 72 x 15 cm, wood, sheet iron, cardboard, glass, gouache  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pictorial Sculpture*, 1915, 70 x 46 x 10 cm, wood, cardboard, oil, and gouache on plywood  
Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Suprematist Sculpture*, 1917, 60 x 50 x 10.2 cm, plywood, cardboard, paint on plywood  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*BANI (Baths)*, 1915, 73 x 92 cm, oil on canvas; on the verso of a landscape painting  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Suprematist Composition*, 1915, 91 x 61.5 x 3.5 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Whist (Card Players)*, 1915–1916, 72 x 64 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Relaxation in a Harem*, 1915–1916, 64 x 73 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pink Vase*, 1917–1918, 65 x 49 cm, oil on canvas  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Red Violin*, 1919, 115 x 146 cm, distemper on paper, mounted on canvas  
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle. Donation de Xénia Pougny (Paris) en 1966  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Embrace*, 1916, 22 x 17.6 cm, india ink and pencil on ruled paper, mounted on cardboard  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Couple*, 1916, 17.6 x 22 cm, india ink on paper, mounted on cardboard  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Staircase*, 1915, 35 x 19 cm, india ink on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Midnight in Vitebsk*, 1919, 78.2 x 61.2 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Street - Vitebsk*, 1917, 36 x 24.7 cm, pencil, colored pencil, and india ink on paper  
 Kunsthaus Zürich, Graphische Sammlung

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Entry to a House in Vitebsk*, 1919, 30 x 21 cm, India ink, pencil, and colored pencil on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Vitebsk - The City*, 1919, 30.5 x 20 cm, india ink, pencil, and colored pencil on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Railroad Car*, 1919, 34 x 20.5 cm, india ink, pencil, colored pencil, and watercolor on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Sirit  
Former Army and Navy Hall with banner RSFR (Russian Socialist Federal Republic), Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



## Photographs of the Russian Revolution from the Collection Ruth and Peter Herzog

Peter Herzog

### "October" – The New Icons



Fig. 56  
Albert Eduard Felisch  
Alexander Column, Saint Petersburg, circa 1880–1885  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 57  
Albert Eduard Felisch  
Nevski Prospect, Saint Petersburg, circa 1880–1885  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Nineteenth-century photographers in Russia, as elsewhere in Europe, documented primarily cityscapes and the lives of the nobility and of upper-middle-class families. The focus was on the portrait of the individual who, because of his or her status, power, or money, had access to the new and thus sought-after medium of photography. The Russian masses, who would soon become the protagonists of social revolution and stand at the center of photographic reportage, are rarely seen. The common people of Russia are found only in certain series of photographs that were intended for ethnographic or sociological purposes and had a picturesque feel. It is even rarer that we encounter the later working-class heroes: farmers, tradesmen, and workers practising their professions (figs. 56–61).

### The Early Days of Photography as Reportage

In the 1890s the German photographer Karl Bulla (1853–1929), who had lived in Saint Petersburg since 1863, opened a photo agency that specialized in current events. Together with his sons, Alexander (1881–1943) and Viktor (1883–1944), he provided the newspapers and magazines of London, Paris, and Berlin with images of Russian daily life.

After Karl Bulla departed for Estonia in 1917 Viktor Bulla—along with such colleagues as Pyotr Otsup (1883–1963), Yakob Steinberg (1880–1942), and Pavel Shukov (1870–1942) – documented the revolutionary events between 1917 and 1920 on behalf of the revolutionary government. The resulting photographs possess an artistic significance that far exceeds the merely documentary. The photographic essay *October* was produced as a kind of kaleidoscopic summary that would, indirectly, blaze the trail for the avant-garde photographers of Europe in the 1920s. Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956), today the most famous Russian photographer of the twentieth century, repeatedly pointed to the immense significance of reportage photography and the decisive influence of the essay *October* on his own work. Consequently, he chose the name *October* for the group of avant-garde photographers he





Fig. 58  
Frédéric Boissonnas and Fritz Egger  
Portrait of Czar Nicolas II with his son, circa 1905  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 60  
Frédéric Boissonnas and Fritz Egger  
Portrait of Czarina Alexandra, circa 1905  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 59  
William Carrick (1827–1878)  
Peasant with sheaves of grain and sickle, circa 1871  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 61  
William Carrick (1827–1878)  
Sower, circa 1871  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

formed in 1928. It has been shown, moreover, that the famous filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein used photographs by Viktor Bulla for his 1927 film *October*.

Artists like Eisenstein and Rodchenko translated the people's revolutionary élan into a kind of dynamism, which they achieved by means of such stylistic devices as shots from above and below and in particular by geometric-above all diagonal-composition of the image (figs. 62–69). In their density the photographs in our albums take on a kind of mediating function between the people, who clearly stood at the origin of the artistic revolution, and the artists, who recorded like seismographs the tremors they felt.

As a symbol of the new departure, Russian youth was frequently the focus of the photographs of Bulla and his colleagues. Electricity (light bulbs, streetlamps, streetcars) was also frequently shown, as a symbol both of the tension that had seized the entire country and of the progress in which nearly all believed at the time. For that reason, many of the photographs in our albums show children's parades (figs. 74–80) and the illuminated facades of former palaces (fig. 83), now decorated with the glowing insignia of the new powers. The seats of the nobility were now occupied by workers' and farmers' committees (fig. 72 and p. 97); the remains of the old splendor – candelabras, exquisite carpets, and exotic plants (fig. 80 and p. 94) – are often still visible in the background of the photographs. Artists working hand in hand with workers, farmers, tradesmen, and intellectuals used panels painted yellow, red, and orange to transform the Alexander Column on Palace Square in Saint Petersburg into a "revolutionary flame" in the cubist style. Artistic designs for public spaces included banners and typographic images with elements that recall the radicalism of Kazimir Malevich or Puni (p. 74).

Along with the tsar, the church had also abdicated as another essential power of Old Russia. Processions gave way to political parades. Processional banners disappeared, to be replaced by political banners and portraits of the new "saints," the workers, farmers, and



Fig. 62  
Viktor Bulla  
Revolutionary decorations on a classical  
building, Saint Petersburg, circa 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 63  
Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956)  
Facade of a power station, 1929





Fig. 64  
Yakob Steinberg  
Alexander Column with the tribune designed  
by Natan Altman, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 65  
Viktor Bulla  
On Uritski Square near the Alexander  
Column, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 66  
 Testis  
 Children's procession, Saint Petersburg, 1919  
 Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 67  
 Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956)  
 At the sports parade, 1936





Fig. 68  
Breitkas  
Lassalle House at night  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Fig. 69  
Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956)  
Festive lighting at Theater Square, 1932



Fig. 70  
Viktor Bulla  
The Red Army battalion named after  
Commissar Moisei Volodarski,  
Saint Petersburg, circa 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

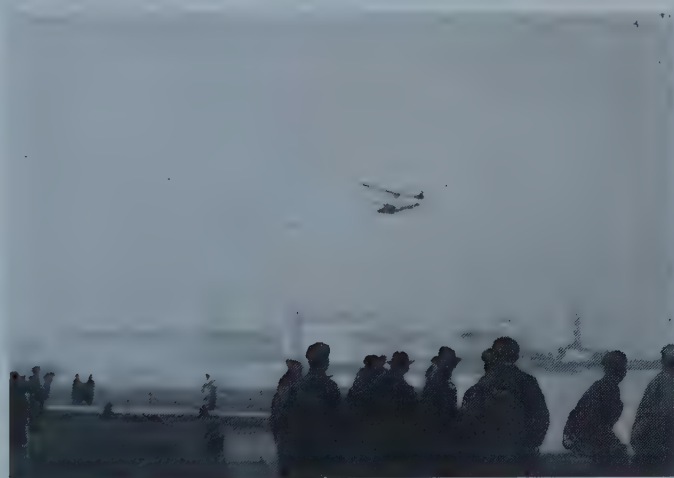


Fig. 71  
Anonymus photographer from the  
Petrograd Photographie and Cinema  
Committee (FoKK)  
Quay opposite the stock exchange,  
Saint Petersburg, circa 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

tradesmen. These images had a significance akin to that of the icons that had previously been found in the churches. Banners and flags were intended to communicate revolutionary messages in an intelligible way, just as the old church icons had communicated religious messages. The coming of the "New Age" was celebrated with the pathos of "New Icons." Members of the army and navy appeared everywhere as protectors. And above it all floated an airplane, another harbinger of a future that was supposed to hold much promise (fig. 71).

Lenin was well aware of the effectiveness of photography. He remarked, among other things, that "history can be written very well by the lens."

### The Influence of the New Icons

Rodchenko, the intellectual leader of the avant-garde photographers, distilled from the work of Bulla and his colleagues the requirements – already mentioned above – that the "New Photographers" absolutely had to fulfil: they were never to photograph from "belly-button perspective," and to employ shots from above and below as strictly as they did the emphasis on the diagonal (geometric composition of the image).

Other features of avant-garde photography that were employed by people like El Lisitski (1890–1941), Gustav Klutsis (1895–1944), Boris Ignatovich (1899–1976), Arkadi Shaikhet (1898–1959), and Otsup, as well as Rodchenko, include dramatic effects of light and shadow across the picture plane, double exposures, and close-ups. The emphasis was on the glorification of the individual and his or her elevation to the status of a type. By contrast with the portraiture of tsarist Russia, however, an individual now represented the country's entire workforce; a single peasant woman stood for all of Russia's peasant women, and so on.

It was not only workers and farmers who were exalted, however, but also goods, preferably produced in the largest possible quantities, such as gears and camshafts, which the photographs transformed into previously unimagined ornaments. On carpets, head-



scarves, and porcelain tableware we now find airplanes and tractors in place of the earlier flowers. The human being had only just triumphed, and already the machine was taking over. Humans and machines were supposed to work in the same rhythm for the benefit of the New Russia.

Examples of revolutionary Russian photography quickly reached Western capitals. The influence of this photography at the Bauhaus or on the photographers of Neue Sachlichkeit (New objectivity) is unmistakable. In Russia itself, however, the works of Russian avant-garde photographers were very soon rejected as politically incorrect, bourgeois, overly formalistic, and decadent. They had to step aside to make way for the banal socialist propaganda images that the government prescribed.

Without the trailblazing elements that are already implicit in the photographs made between 1917 and 1920, Russia would never have had its internationally admired revolutionary art and artistic revolution.<sup>1</sup> Even today, photography, painting, graphic works, sculpture, film, theater, literature, and architecture owe a great deal more than is generally acknowledged to reportage photography, which was a source of inspiration to them, however much it may be smiled at or even regarded as inferior.

Berninger, Herman, and Jean-Albert Cartier. Pougny: *Jean Pougny (Iwan Puni), 1892–1956: Catalogue de l'œuvre. Vol. 1, Les années d'avantgarde: Russie-Berlin, 1910–1923*. Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 1972.

Elliott, David, ed. *Russische Photographie, 1840–1940*. Exh. cat. Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn. Berlin: Ars Nicolai, 1992.

Girardin, Daniel, ed. *Alexandre Rodchenko: La femme en jeu*. Exh. cat. Musée de l'Élysée. Lausanne: La petite école, 1997.

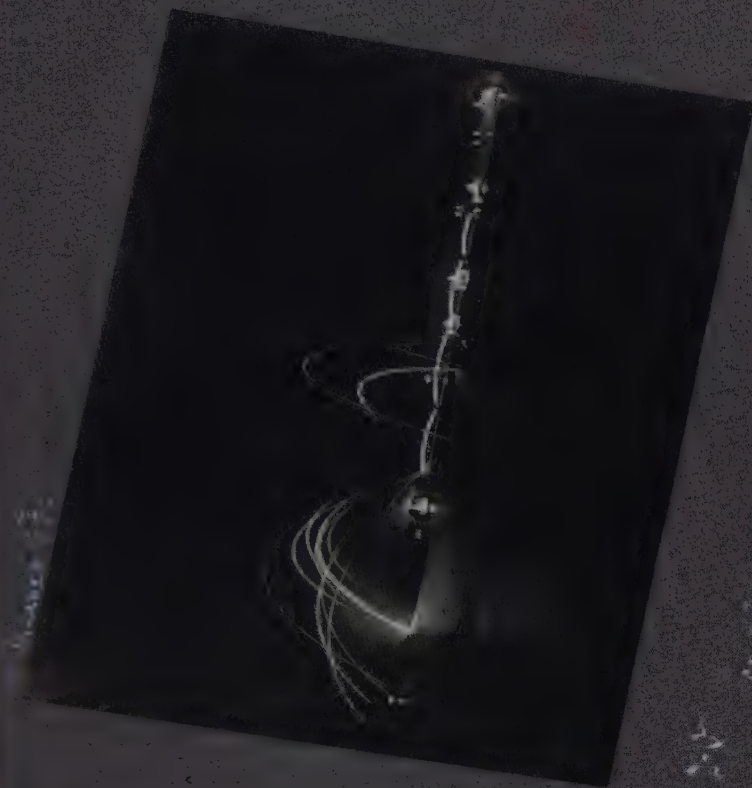
Hornbostel, Wilhelm, et al., eds. *Mit voller Kraft: Russische Avantgarde, 1910–1934*. Exh. cat. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. Heidelberg: Edition Braus, 2001.

Obolenskii, Chloe. *Das Alte Russland: Ein Porträt früher Photographien, 1850–1914*. Munich: C. H. Beck, 1980.

*Photographie aus der Sowjetunion. Vol. 1, Leben im zaristischen Russland. Vol. 2, Die Revolution: Die Anfänge des Bildjournalismus in der Sowjetunion*. Exh. cat. Zurich: Schweizerische Stiftung für Photographie, 1989.

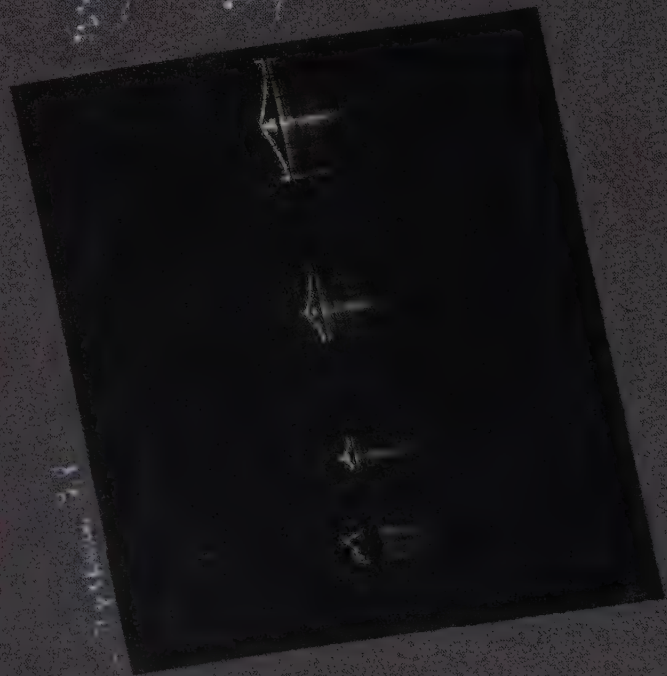
*Das Russland der Zaren: Photographien von 1839 bis zur Oktoberrevolution*. Berlin: Dirk Nishen, 1989.

<sup>1</sup> This was really the second Russian revolution in art. The first was not political in origin but resulted from the coming together of Russian artists like Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova in 1907–1908. This revolution was continued by people like Puni, Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin, Ivan Klyun, and so on.



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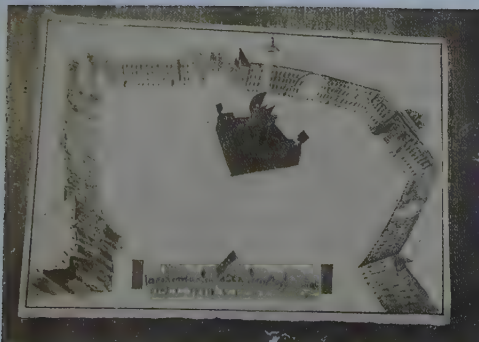


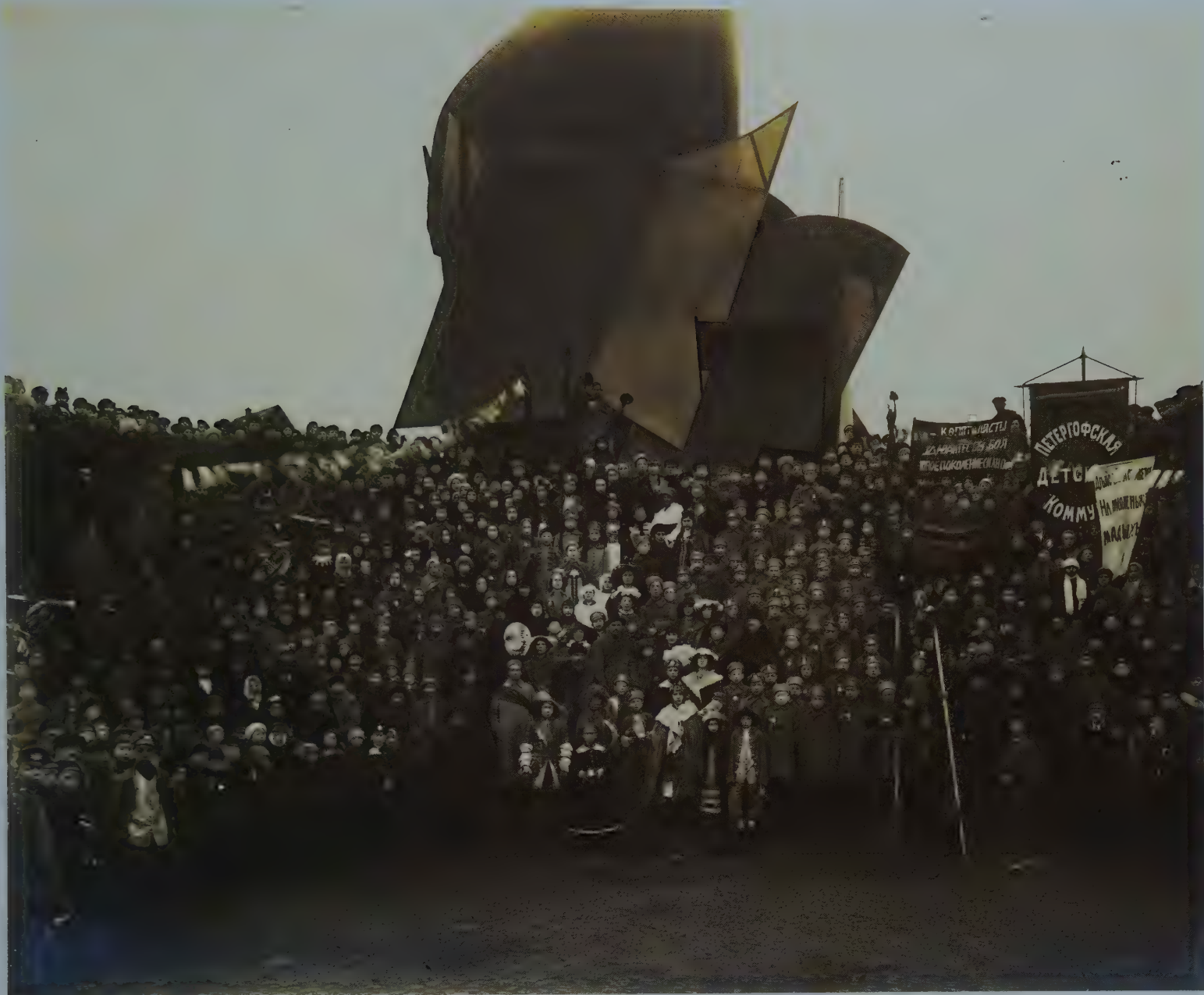
















КОНМУВЕРЖИХ-УШЕЛ-  
ШИХЕТ-ЖИЗНИВОИМЯЖИЗНИ  
РАЗВЕТА-НЫНЕ-ПРИМНУ  
И-СЫНЫ-ПЕТРОГРАДА.



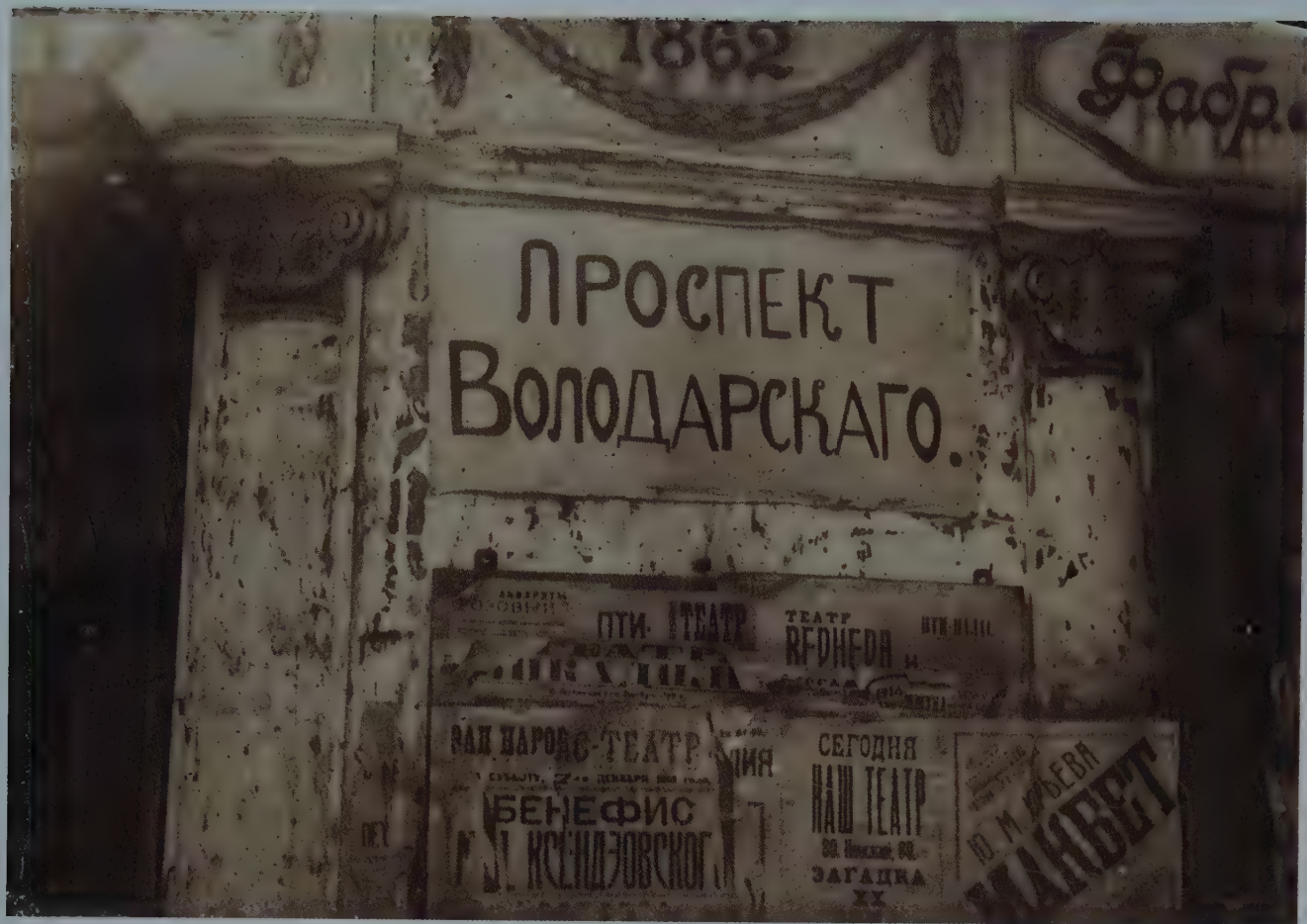








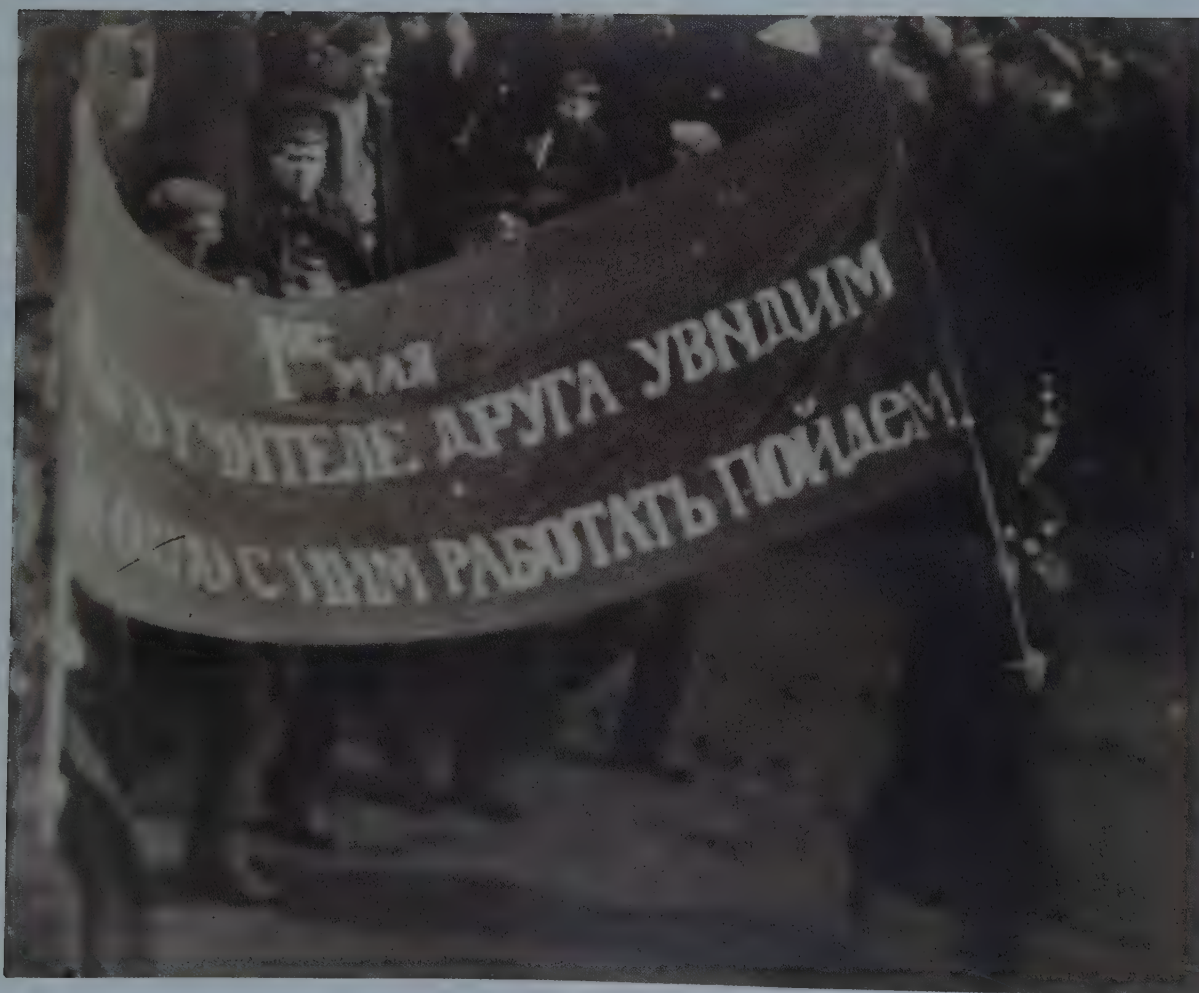
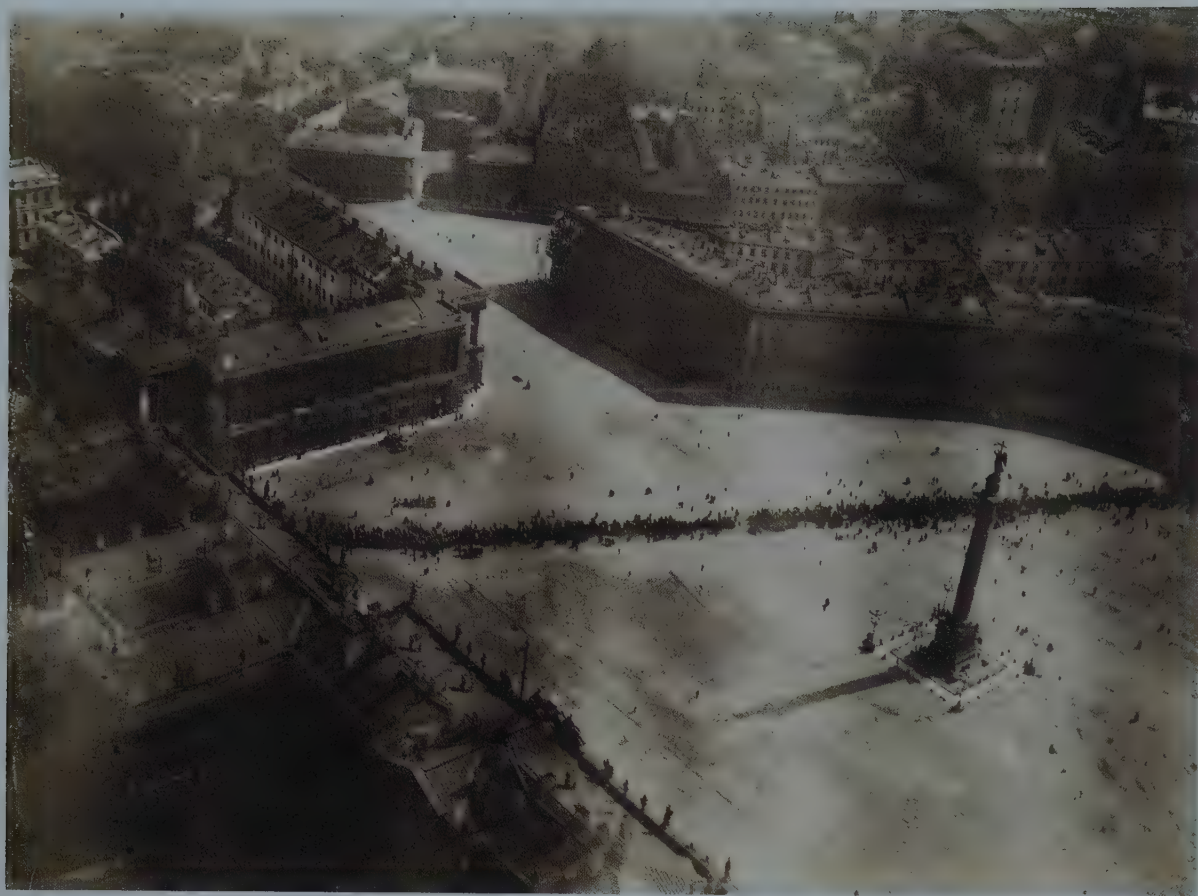














Норенский уезд

31



25



Норенский

XXX  
25

26



Председатель Норенского уезда

Одновременно баллотирован в Норенский (X)



Page 83

Page from the album with white script  
Photographs by Viktor K. Bulla, Wesenberg, et al.,  
with views of lighted steamships on the Neva  
River, Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 84

Yushkevish  
Commissar of Enlightenment Anatoli Lunacharski  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 85

Above:  
Viktor K. Bulla  
On Uritski Square  
Saint Petersburg, 8 November 1918

Below:  
Anonymous photographer of the Photograph  
and Cinema Committee (FoKK) of Petrograd  
Parade in Roshdestvenski Quarter  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 86

Above:  
Viktor K. Bulla  
Decorated steamship on the Neva River  
on the first anniversary of the Russian Revolution  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Selesiev  
Model of a revolutionary ship mounted  
on an automobile  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

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Above:  
Testis  
Parade on 7 November  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Dmitriev  
On Labor Square  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 88

Above:  
Wesenberg  
Children on Uritski Square  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Struinikova  
Streetcar transporting children  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 89

Yakob Steinberg  
People's commissars at the Smolni in front  
of the monument to Karl Marx  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 90

Above:  
Surov  
The Alexander Column with the tribune designed  
by Natan Altman  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Testis  
Natan Altman's design for the tribune around  
the Alexander Column  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 91

Viktor K. Bulla  
At the Alexander Column on Uritski Square  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 92

Shdanovski  
On the Field of Mars  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 93

Tulyakov  
Tribune on the Field of Mars and zeppelin  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 94

Above:  
Viktor K. Bulla  
Temporary triumphal architecture  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Viktor K. Bulla  
Festive meeting in the Smolni  
on 7 November  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 95

Above:  
Kudlubovich  
Narvskaya Gate  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Tumyakova  
Painting a decoration at the Petrograd soviet  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 96

Above:  
Street sign of the former Liteini Prospect, with  
"Volodarskovo Prospect" written over it  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Anonymous photographer of the Photograph and  
Cinema Committee (FoKK) of Petrograd  
Painting flags and banners in the Smolni  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 97

Above:  
Children watching from the side of  
Krasnikh Sor Street  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Breitkas  
Peasants in the Winter Palace  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

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Above:  
Karpenko  
Uritski Square, photographed from an airplane  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Below:  
Testis  
Banner with proletarian slogan  
Saint Petersburg, 1918

Page 99

Page from the album with black script  
Photographs by Yakob Steinberg, Testis, et al.;  
some are torn out and details, like the face of the  
person in the photograph at lower right, have  
been scratched out

All photographs  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Heiko Haumann and Andreas Guski

**Revolution and Photography**  
On Two Photo Albums from the People's  
Commissariat for Enlightenment  
and on the Utopia of the Future Society\*

\*The chapters "Two Albums" and "Utopia and History"  
have been written by Heiko Haumann,  
the chapter "Revolution and Carnival"  
by Andreas Guski.

**Two Albums**

There are two photo albums in the Fondation Herzog that both alter our picture of the Russian Revolution and make it more precise, and hence they have extraordinary value as historical sources. Both derive from the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment, that is, the "ministry" for popular education that was established after the October Revolution. One of the albums is distinguished by writing in white ink and the note: "Photo Album of the Photograph and Cinema Section of the Central Office for the Organization of the Celebrations of the October Revolution". It relates to the activities in Petrograd – as Saint Petersburg was known between 1914 and 1924 for the first anniversary of the Revolution of 1918. The other album has writing in black ink and has on the front page the note: "Photos Collected by the Petrograd Photo – Cinema Committee, Taken by Its Own Photographers and Photo Correspondents. People's Commissariat for Enlightenment. Petrograd Secretary of the Photo-Cinema Committee". Here we find various events documented – in particular, the celebrations on 1 May 1919. All of the photos are numbered – probably originally according to the photographers – but not continuously; it is clear that when they were bound in the albums a selection of the collection was made and a new order established. A few photos had been torn out or damaged. As a rule the photos have captions, but they often leave important questions unanswered. In the "white" album the names of the photographers are immediately next to the photos; in the "black" one they follow numbers collected at the end.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Yessica San Roman for her preliminary inventory of the photos, for translations of the captions and the legible texts on the photos, and for attributions to photographers. In the time available it was not possible to find biographical information all of the people mentioned in the text that follows; in some cases it was not even possible to determine first names. For important suggestions and support I am grateful to Thomas Bürgisser, Rebekka Edlund Knobel, Andreas Guski, Daniel Lis, Julia Richers (in particular), Erik Petry, Carmen Scheide, Heinz Stahlhut, and Ruth and Peter Herzog.



Several of the photographers should be introduced briefly here. Viktor Karlovich Bulla was born in Saint Petersburg in 1883, the son of the photographer Karl Bulla (1853–1929). After studying in Germany he was active as a photo correspondent in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 and then in the First World War. His photographs from the February and October Revolutions in Petrograd in 1917 became famous. The Petrograd Soviet – that is, the Council of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies – named him director of the Photo Committee. Other family members – above all his brother Alexander (1881–1943) – and colleagues were active as photographers in Bulla’s studio. The People’s Commissariat for Enlightenment called upon the Photo Committee to document the celebrations for the first anniversary of the Revolution of November 1918 as well as other events of the period. In 1935 Bulla transferred to the archive more than 100,000 negatives of Russia’s recent history that had been in the possession of this family of photographers. He did not escape the Stalinist terror of the 1930s. In 1937 he was arrested; he disappeared into the GULAG<sup>2</sup> and died in 1944 in a labor camp in the Far East.<sup>3</sup>

Other photographers that the People’s Commissariat entrusted to make photographs were similarly productive. Yakob Vladimirovich Steinberg (1880–1942), who had begun as a war photographer and then became one of the most important Soviet photojournalists, left behind more than 6,000 negatives. Pavel Semyonovich Shukov (1870–1942), however, was killed and his extensive photo collection lost when his Leningrad apartment was destroyed during the Second World War. After the Revolution, as a famous portraitist, he was appointed head photographer of the Petrograd section of the military and later in Moscow would record in photographs the building of socialism. Yuri Petrovich Yeryomin (1881–1948) came from the Cos-

sack region on the Don River, traveled through many of Russia’s regions, and developed an artistic technique. Many of his works earned him a reputation as a “photo poet,” but he was always active as a photojournalist.<sup>4</sup> The People’s Commissariat for Enlightenment, under the direction of Anatoli V. Lunacharski (1875–1933), recognized the importance of photography and cinematography and saw to it that laws and ordinances put their production, sale, and distribution entirely under his control. Lunacharski wrote at the time, “I believe that the equipment in our brains is still far superior to camera equipment and that the former can combine, think, and feel. However, a photo too is not just a chemical plate but the expression of an enormous social and psychological creative act.”<sup>5</sup> In the period after the Revolution the ability of the press to function as a means of mass communication was limited by paper shortages and production shortfalls. Moreover, there were many it did not reach because of widespread illiteracy. Other media thus became increasingly important. Photographs, often collected in series as a kind of reportage, were meant to capture both important events and everyday happenings. The photos were shown – along with posters, satirical drawings, and series of pictures that told a story<sup>6</sup> – on newspapers displayed on walls, in display cases and vitrines (often with little or no text), in agitprop parades and on street walls, and in train stations and workers’ clubs. Copies

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the photographers, see Nina Klingler, *24 Stunden aus dem Leben einer Moskauer Arbeiterfamilie: Die Fotoreportage als historische Quelle*, unpublished Lizenz thesis (Universität Basel 2002), esp. 22–23; *Antologiya sovetskoi fotografii*, vol. 1, 1917–40, ed. Anrii Vartanov et al. (Moscow: Izdat. Planeta, 1986), 19, 25, 35, 135. See also *Die Revolution: Die Anfänge des Bildjournalismus in der Sowjetunion* (Zürich: Schweizerische Stiftung für die Photographie, Kunsthaus Zürich, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Cited in Klingler, *24 Stunden aus dem Leben einer Moskauer Arbeiterfamilie* (note 5), 23 n. 98. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970); idem, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> The last named were the ROSTA windows (ROSSiiskoe Telegrafnoe Agentstvo, or Russian telegraph agency) that were modeled after traditional illustrated broadsheets (lubki).

<sup>2</sup> Gulag is an acronym of “Glavnoe Upravlenie ispravitel’no-trudovykh LAGErei” (chief administration of the corrective labor camps).

<sup>3</sup> A[lexandr] L[avrentiev], “Bulla, Viktor Karlovich,” in Irina Antonova and Jörn Merkert, eds., *Berlin-Moskau / Moskva-Berlin* (Munich and New York: Prestel Verlag, 1995), 556.



Fig. 72  
Breitkas  
Canteen of the Poor Peasants' Committees  
in the Winter Palace, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 73  
Viktor Bulla  
Delegates of the Poor Peasants' Committees,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

were sent to organizations and individuals who were in a position to pass the information along in a targeted fashion. A similar purpose was served by photo albums that were produced in editions of ten to a hundred copies.<sup>7</sup> A discussion of examples in several thematic areas may serve here as an introduction to what our photo albums reveal.<sup>8</sup>

### Utopia and History

#### *Peasants in the Winter Palace*

The contrast could not be greater: A hallway in the Winter Palace in Petrograd, the former residence of the czar, with busts of important figures from the past between its columns, is filled with "the people." Peasants sit at long tables; on the white paper tablecloths before them rest loaves of bread and other food, hats and other articles of clothing. They are surrounded by still more peasants, both male and female. They are looking toward the photographer Breitkas. It is the canteen of the Poor Peasants' Committee (fig. 72). The members are holding their First Congress as part of the celebrations for the first anniversary of the October Revolution of 1917. Another photo by Breitkas shows several peasants in a room in the Winter Palace, sitting or standing at a round table and discussing something (p. 97). In other photographs, by Petersen and Strupnikov, members of the committee can be seen on the streets. Bulla photographed a number of them as a group (fig. 73). Two of twenty-seven sitters are women; one is wearing a headscarf, the other a hat and a paper rose in her overcoat. The men, some of whom are dressed in tra-

<sup>7</sup> Rosalinde Sartori, *Die sowjetische Fotokorrespondentenbewegung*, in Eberhard Knödler-Bunte and Gernot Erler, eds., *Kultur und Kulturrevolution in der Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Ästhetik und Kommunikation Verlags-GmbH; Kronberg: Scriptor-Verlag, 1978), 105–12, esp. 105–6; Klingler, *24 Stunden aus dem Leben einer Moskauer Arbeiterfamilie* (note 5), 23–25.

<sup>8</sup> A comprehensive analysis would also have to explain, by comparison with reports about the celebrations and other (photographic) publications, what the albums do not show and what was depicted in later publications. This would make clear the intentions that guided the actions of the People's Commissariat and what would later be remembered.



ditional peasant clothing, while others look like workers or soldiers, are holding in their hands objects they have brought with them: works of folk art, baked goods, texts (Lenin can be seen on one brochure, while another depicts an agitprop activity),<sup>9</sup> and several objects wrapped in newspaper that are perhaps gifts or goods to barter.

The Revolution has truly occurred. Where once the czar lived and ruled, the ambassadors of the village poor now eat and advise. Instead of symbols of czarist rule, the public is shown items from the common people and publications from the new powers. The relationships have been reversed. The change could not be better symbolized. The organization of the rural proletariat into Poor Peasants' Committees was intended to bring the class struggle to the villages and thus bring the Revolution to completion. In the view of the Bolsheviks, the Russian Communists, the political rule of the bourgeoisie ended in October 1917.<sup>10</sup> Even in industry the bourgeoisie had little influence left, after the factory committees took over the direction of many firms as a form of "workers' control"; after an economic administration and planning apparatus for the new state had been established; and after large companies were nationalized on 28 June 1918. In the country, landowners, monasteries, and churches were expropriated and their land nationalized immediately after the October Revolution. The land was, however, made available to peasants for their own usufruct. The Bolsheviks and their allies thus fulfilled the desires of the peasants and legalized a process that had already begun prior to October 1917 in spontaneous actions by peasants. Now the transformation into a socialist economic

structure was to be advanced. The Poor Peasants' Committee, which was established by resolution on 11 June 1918, was given the task to aid the state food supply organizations in confiscating grain surpluses from the propertied groups – specifically, the more prosperous peasants known as "kulaks"<sup>11</sup> – and to distribute them among the poor according to specified norms. The remainder was left for the state to provide food supply for the urban population; rural residents in areas suffering from shortages; and the Red Army, which was involved in furious battles with the "Whites" – the counterrevolutionaries – and with foreign troops trying to intervene. At the same time, the committees were supposed to redistribute the everyday utensils and agricultural equipment that the kulaks possessed. In this way, or so went the thinking of those responsible, the supply of food would be secured, a balanced distribution of grain between regions of surplus and regions of shortage would be established,<sup>12</sup> and the class enemies in the village would be stripped of power. The rural proletariat could then restructure production on this new basis and introduce a socialist development that paralleled that of industry.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, the texts are not legible, so that it is not possible to say precisely what they are. Vladimir I. Ulyanov, known as Lenin (1870–1924), was then chair of the Council of People's Commissars, that is, of the Soviet government.

<sup>10</sup> In Russia the Gregorian calendar that was used in the West was first introduced in February 1918, replacing the Julian calendar. To convert Russian dates from 1582 to 1700, add ten days; in the eighteenth century, eleven; in the nineteenth century, twelve; and from 1900 to 1918, thirteen. Hence the October Revolution took place on 25 October, or 7 November on the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>11</sup> A peasant was considered a kulak (Russian for fist) who had somewhat more land, cattle, and farming equipment than others, often employed servants or agricultural workers, and produced enough surplus to accumulate capital. Despite many attempts, a more precise definition was never achieved, because the border between kulaks and "middle peasants" was fluid; social mobility was considerable; and regional differences were so significant that a universal definition of the characteristics involved proved impossible.

<sup>12</sup> The principle of "compensatory distribution" (*prodravverstka*) was passed by resolution in early May 1918 into order to create a homogeneous socioeconomic basis in the villages and to cut out the kulaks, who were blamed for declining grain deliveries.

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise noted, for the general background I am following my *Geschichte Russlands* (Munich and Zurich: Piper, 1996; rev. ed. in preparation) without additional citation. The resolutions regarding nationalization of industry and the formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees are found in Helmut Altrichter and Heiko Haumann, eds., *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2 of *Die Sowjetunion: Von der Oktoberrevolution bis zu Stalins Tod* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 68–73 (available online at <http://mdz.bib-bvb.de/digbib/sowjetunion>). For the historical context treated here, the following works will provide additional introduction: Abbott Gleason et al., eds., *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985); Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985);



Fig. 74  
Anonymous photographer from the Petrograd Photography  
and Cinema Committee (FoKK)  
Proletarian children's day on Uritski Square,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 75  
Viktor Bulla  
Children from the children's home in the Spasski district,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

When the members of the committees met in Petrograd in early November 1918 for their First Congress, however, it became clear that the desired effects had not been achieved. The committees had often taken advantage of the opportunities that their power in the village offered and first took care of themselves. The cities and impoverished rural areas were essentially no better supplied with grain than before, and the committees had not only taken advantage of the kulaks but of the "middle peasants" as well. This cannot have been a matter of indifference to the Bolsheviks, as in fact they hoped to gain the majority of peasants as allies. In other cases it became clear that the rather schematic application of class division to the villages did not do justice to their circumstances. The peasants united against the state food supply organizations. In general, it became clear that the peasants, the majority of whom were sympathetic to the October Revolution, would not tolerate state involvement in their internal affairs, which they wanted to run according to their own ideas. The expectation that the "proletarian" peasants would, in order to set the development of socialism in motion, confidently follow their class instinct and turn against those who no longer pursued a "moral economy" of insuring the means of existence but instead pursued a capitalist maximization of profit, did not prove justified. On 9 November 1918, two days after the anniversary celebrations, the Sixth All-Russian Soviet Congress decided that the Poor Peasants' Committees should see to it that the village soviets were elected anew and that their power was increased. The committees could be absorbed into the soviets and

James van Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917–1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1993); James van Geldern and Richard Stites, eds., *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917–1953* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995); Diane Koenker et al., eds., *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War: Explorations in Social History* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1989); Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York and Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989). An impression of the cultural forms of the time can already be found in René Fülöp-Miller, *Geist und Gesicht des Bolschewismus: Darstellung und Kritik des kulturellen Lebens in Sowjet-Russland* (Zurich, Leipzig, and Vienna: Amalthea-Verlag, 1926).





Fig. 76  
Viktor Bulla  
Parade of the children from the orphanages  
of the Narvski district, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 77  
Viktor Bulla  
Children's celebration, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 78  
Tulyakova  
Children's celebration on Uritski Square,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 79  
Wesenberg  
Children's celebration on Uritski Square,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 80  
Viktor Bulla  
Children's celebration in Philharmonic Hall,  
organized by Comrade Zinovyev,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

would thus become superfluous.<sup>14</sup> Clearly, the thought was not that the processes in the villages could be better coordinated and controlled by means of the soviet structure.

The photos of the committee members in the Winter Palace are therefore unique documents. They symbolize the outwardly visible aspect of bringing the Revolution to its conclusion. Where the czar had been, the people were now – in this case, peasants, who represented eighty percent of the population.<sup>15</sup> Indirectly, however, seen in their historical context, the photos also suggest that the people did not behave as the political leadership had hoped, and that problems were cropping up in the process of the Revolution.

#### *Children as Guarantors of the Future*

Nevertheless, the feeling of utopia from the imminent construction of socialism is alive. This is demonstrated by other photos from the anniversary of the Revolution. Children appear with noticeable frequency. On 8 November 1918 a children's festival took place as part of the celebrations. Several photos show a parade of children on Petrograd's Urtski Square,<sup>16</sup> accompanied by a band and a number of adults. It shows, along with other flags, a large banner that was probably in color. The banner depicts a girl and a boy who, to judge from

<sup>14</sup> Helmut Altrichter, ed., *Staat und Partei*, vol. 1 of *Die Sowjetunion: Von der Oktoberrevolution bis zu Stalins Tod* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986), 34-35 (available online at <http://mdz.bib-bvb.de/digbib/sowjetunion>). On the committees in the Petrograd area, see Falk Döring, *Organisationsprobleme der russischen Wirtschaft in Revolution und Bürgerkrieg, 1918–1920, dargestellt am Volkswirtschaftsrat für den Nordrussland* (SNChSR) (Hannover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1970), 141–42.

<sup>15</sup> After October 1917 the Bolsheviks spoke frequently of the "great peasant revolution" in order to make it clear that the coup would not have been possible without the peasant movement.

<sup>16</sup> The square was named after Mikhail S. Urtski, the chair of the Petrograd section of the All-Russian Special Commission for the Struggle against Counterrevolution and Sabotage (*Vserossiiskaya chrezvychainaya komissiya po borbe s kontrrevolyutsiei i sabotazhem*, VChK) – the secret police – who on 30 August 1918 was murdered by members of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. That same day Lenin was badly injured in an assassination attempt in Moscow. These attacks provided the final impetus for the "red mass terror" that was intended as a response to the behavior of counterrevolutionaries.



their clothing, were from the peasantry. They stand together in front of a radiant sun and bear a wreath with an unidentifiable symbol. Above them, between the rays of the sun, is the message "The future lies with the children". The inscription on the top border is not legible (fig. 74). Other photos show a parade of orphans, some in regional dress (fig. 76). The flags and banners have peasant symbols or slogans like "Long live Soviet power and the Third International."<sup>17</sup> Children in a group photo are seen proudly holding a flag with the words "Orphanage of the Spasski Region"; next to them is a picture of Lunacharski and a girl holding up her doll (fig. 75).<sup>18</sup> Bulla, who photographed many scenes at this children's festival, took one photo that clearly depicts a game on Uritski Square, formerly Dvortsovaya Square. In the foreground we see a child dressed as a bear; next to the child is a young boy, wearing what looks like a uniform and a floppy hat and carrying a pole with a lantern. These two are surrounded by other children and youths in military uniforms or in livery (some of whom are carrying long poles), in historical costumes, or regional dress. Many appear to be from Central Asia or the Far East. There is a band in a circle and a number of spectators; a parade has just arrived carrying banners with slogans – including once again "Long live Soviet power and the Third International." In the background another gathering can be seen, and on a kind of wall in front of the palaces stands the phrase, in large letters, "Proletarians of

all countries, unite!"<sup>19</sup> (p. 85). The same actresses and actors are found, as one photo makes clear, on a stage, on each side of which appears a picture of Lenin and of (probably) Lunacharski, respectively. Many children of various ages are sitting in front of the stage (fig. 77).<sup>20</sup>

In another photo we can see children in uniform with their teachers; a young woman is carrying a large picture of Lev Davidovich Trotski (1879–1940), who was People's Commissar of War at the time. Possibly they were acting out scenes from the civil war (fig. 78).<sup>21</sup> One children's parade, also on Uritski Square, follows a banner with the words "School and work"; another has the slogan "We demand universal education for children" (fig. 79).<sup>22</sup> A high point of the children's festival was apparently an event in the philharmonic hall, which was organized by Grigori Yevseyevich Zinovyev (1883–1936), the chair of the Petrograd soviet, who in March 1919 would be elected to chair the Executive Committees of the Communist International as well (fig. 80).<sup>23</sup> Another photo documents the distribution of gifts to the children. There are also many photographs of decorated streetcars, filled with children (p. 88).

The photos demonstrate that children were now considered important and were taken seriously, that they were under the protection of the Soviet state. The leading Bolsheviks wanted children, who carry within them the future, to reflect most clearly the goal of the October Revolution: to clear the way to a just society of

<sup>17</sup> This is a bit confusing, as the Third International was not founded until March 1919. The photo-like the one described after it-probably depicts the preparations for its founding. Banners that welcome the Third International also appear in photos from 1919, such as that with employees of Mariinski Hospital (no. 28/29 on page 11b of the album with black ink; hereinafter such citations will take the form "Photo No. B-11-b-28/29," etc.; the numbering of the pages is my own, as the pages in the albums are not numbered).

<sup>18</sup> Both of the photos described here are also by Bulla (Nos. 744 and 734 on page 4a of the album that was devoted directly to the anniversary celebrations and that was written with white ink; hereinafter such citations will take the form "Photo No. W-04-a-744," etc.).

<sup>19</sup> Uritski Square was designed by Natan I. Altman (1889-1970). See the illustrations in Vladimir P. Tolstoj, ed., *Agitacionno-massovoe iskusstvo, oformlenie prazdnestv: Sovetskoe dekorativnoe iskusstvo; Materialy i dokumenty, 1917–1932*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1984), vol. 2, nos. 24–35; Vladimir Tolstoj, Irina Bibikova, and Catherine Cooke, eds., *Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia, 1918–33* (London: Thames & Hudson; New York: Vendome Press, 1990), 89–91, nos. 46–53 (*Street Art of the Revolution is an abridged translation of Agitacionno-massovoe iskusstvo*).

<sup>20</sup> Photo No. W-25-a-915 by Bulla. See also Photo No. W-17-b-948 by Bulla.

<sup>21</sup> Photo No. W-24-b-527 by Tulyakova.

<sup>22</sup> Photo No. W-24-b-540 by Vetsenberg, Photo No. W-25-a-778 by Petersen (unfortunately, the other texts are not legible).

<sup>23</sup> Photo Nos. W-24-a-722 and 727 by Bulla.

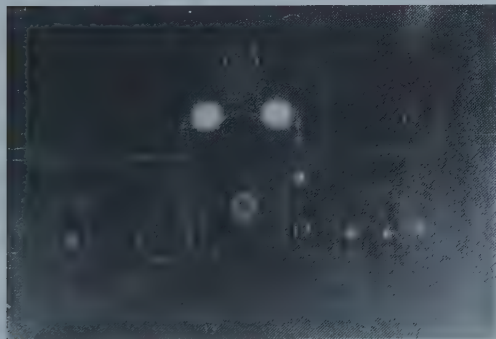
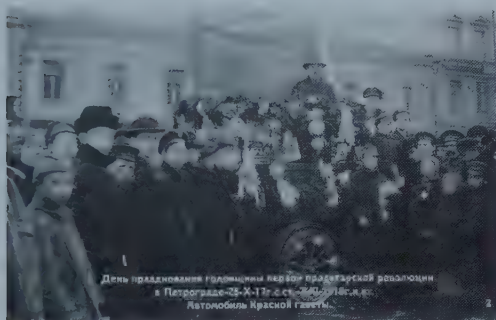


Fig. 81  
Testis  
Cinematograph on an automobile,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 82  
Zenter  
Automobile of the Red Newspaper  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 83  
Viktor Bulla  
The Warsaw Station at night  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

free human beings. Soon after the Revolution, on 14 January 1918, it was decreed that there would no longer be courts and prisons for children. The age of majority for crime, which under the czars was ten, was increased to seventeen. Sixteen-year-olds had to answer to the Commissions for Youth Affairs, which could propose punishments but were supposed to focus on solutions based in education and welfare. The idea behind this was the view that criminality among children and young people was ultimately caused by social conditions. The focus was not on the interests of the state but on those of children and young people.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, there were pedagogical concepts – such as those of Stanislav T. Shatski (1878–1934) or Pavel P. Blonski (1884–1941) – that rejected corporal punishment in schools, placed enlightenment above compulsion, and condemned the “cult of the military state.”<sup>25</sup> As early as 13 December 1917 the People’s Commissar for Enlightenment had decreed a pedagogical soviet for middle schools in which older students, parents, and the local soviet had a seat and a voice alongside the teachers. On 2 February 1918 the administrative body for education was dissolved; three days later schools were separated from the church and religious instruction was abolished. Shortly thereafter all uniforms and insignia were eliminated from schools. On 31 May 1918 reports replaced grades.<sup>26</sup> In the summer of 1918, faced with worsening civil war and economic decline, pedagogical theorists and teachers discussed the design of the new schools. The

<sup>24</sup> Peter H. Juviler, *Contradictions of Revolution: Juvenile Crime and Rehabilitation*, in Gleason et al., eds., *Bolshevik Culture* (note 14), 261–78. See also Corinna Kuhr-Korolev, Stefan Plaggenborg, and Monica Wellmann, eds., *Sowjetjugend, 1917–1941: Generation zwischen Revolution und Resignation* (Essen: Klartext, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> See, on this and what follows, Peter Lüthi, *Die Idee der Arbeits-Schule auf dem Weg zur Verwirklichung im ersten Jahrzehnt der Russischen Revolution: Aus dem Drama des revolutionären Idealismus*, unpublished Lizenz thesis (Basel: Universität Basel, 1997), esp. 40; Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *Small Comrades: Revolutionizing Childhood in Soviet Russia, 1917–1932* (New York and London: Routledge Falmer, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Altrichter and Haumann, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (note 14), 38, 49–51, 61.





Fig. 84  
 Karpenko  
 Square of the Fallen Heroes of the Revolution (Field of Mars)  
 as seen from an airplane, Saint Petersburg, 1919  
 Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 85  
 Viktor Bulla  
 Lassalle House, Saint Petersburg, 1919  
 Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

high point was the First All-Russian Congress for Enlightenment in August 1918. Views swung between those advocating the complete destruction of the old system with sanctions against class enemies and a more moderate line taking the view that all children need love and giving precedence to a free education. Lunacharski took a middle position that sought to provide reforms while using parts of the existing school system, in particular the existing teachers. On 30 September 1918 the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets decreed an ordinance for the Unified Labor School.<sup>27</sup> Once again the focus was on utopia, even though it was clear to all involved that it would in no way be possible to achieve this utopia in a blanket fashion, given the circumstances at the time. All tests, homework, and punishment were to be eliminated. Self-government was to be introduced, in which a quarter of the members of the school's self-government were students twelve and over. The teachers, who were now called "school workers," were to be elected. One school worker should have no more than twenty-five students. Instead of fixed school classes, groups were to be formed based on the level of education of the students. Nine years of school attendance, from age eight to seventeen, was to be obligatory, free of charge, and general, and it was based on the idea of work. Productive work in collectives would awaken students' creative powers and should not be oriented around specialized education but around a polytechnic general education, the requirements of the whole society, and the ideal of creating a beautiful world. This vision of the future could not stand up to the realities of the civil war, the growing violence of the time, and the centralization of political decision making. Nevertheless, several schools and children's camps experimented with the principles of free education, and into the 1920s there were attempts now and again to return to the pedagogical ideals of 1918.

The impressive photos of the children's festival during

the anniversary celebrations cast light on the enthusiasm and the value that was then placed on children's development as part of the Revolution's development. And they also clarify a little the children's pride that for once, in these difficult times, they stood at the focus, with all eyes on them as the guarantors of the socialist future.

### *"Enlightenment through Light"*

In material terms the future was to be secured by means of a planned economy. Special importance was placed on electrification. The introduction of the most modern technology available was intended to make it possible to rebuild the shattered economic structure more quickly and more fundamentally at the same time. This would not only remedy the current economic difficulties but also accelerate a much needed industrialization as well as a modernization of agriculture. In the minds of many specialists – and of many leading Bolsheviks as well – electrification was not just a technological aid; it was considered a primary tool to steer the economy and to develop productive forces. At the same time it was connected to a wide range of goals: electrification could overcome the opposition between city and country and transform the worker's function from one of implementation to one of organization. An economy based on electricity would no longer distinguish between manual and intellectual labor, hence there would no longer be hierarchies in the work process; the exploitation of human beings by other human beings would cease to exist. Electrification, moreover, stood for an "enlightenment through light" – in a literal and a metaphorical sense – especially in rural areas. "The electrification of souls / Will give country people wings [...]," wrote Mikhail P. Gerasimov (1889-1939), a poet in the "Proletarian Culture" (Proletkult) movement, in 1920.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Altrichter and Haumann, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (note 14), 78–81.

<sup>28</sup> Mikhail P. Gerasimov, *Elektrifizierung*, in Richard Lorenz, *Proletarische Kulturrevolution in Sowjetrußland, 1917–1921: Dokumente des "Proletkult,"* trans. Uwe Brüggemann and Gert Meyer (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1969), 98–103, esp. 99.



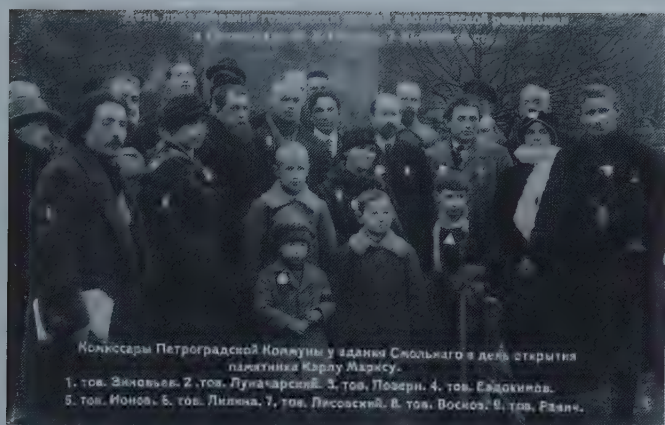


Fig. 86  
Zenter  
Commissars of the Petrograd Commune at  
the Smolny Building at the dedication  
of the Karl Marx monument,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 87  
Yakob Steinberg  
The Roshdestvenski council with a portrait  
of Karl Liebknecht, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 88  
Testis  
Naum Antselovitch, superintendent of the celebrations,  
Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 89  
Viktor Bulla  
Representatives of the "Soviet Region of Germany",  
Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

The State Commission for the Electrification of Russia (Gosudarstvennaya komissiya po Elektrifikatsii Rossii, or GOELRO) presented the first ever comprehensive, long-term economic plan in history to the Eighth Soviet Congress in late December 1920. The plan sought to meet the material and social requirements for socialism in ten to fifteen years. At the time Lenin coined the phrase “Communism: that is Soviet power plus electrification of the entire country.” It described the concrete utopia in which, within a foreseeable time frame, a flourishing economy could be established from a drained economy.<sup>29</sup> The work to do so had begun immediately after the October Revolution, particularly in Petrograd. Companies in the electrical industry were made state property very early on and specific projects were presented, such as the construction of hydroelectric plants on the Svir and the Volkhov Rivers, the establishment of experimental agricultural farms nearby that were run by electricity, and the electrification of all the industry of the northern region and of the city itself.<sup>30</sup> Lenin, who was in close contact with famous specialists in electricity, took an active part in these plans.

The subject of electrification found its way into the photos of the Revolution anniversary celebrations and of other activities as well. Numerous buildings and bridges were illuminated, as were the ships of the Red Fleet; fireworks above the Neva River were photographed (p. 83).<sup>31</sup> The illumination of the Warsaw Train Station in Petrograd at night, also photographed by Bulla, is particularly interesting. It is not just the outlines of the building that stand out. The large windows are resplendent with stars, and above the main entrance shines the “Shield of David,” the six-pointed star

that has become a symbol of Jewish identity (fig. 83). The nighttime illumination of the city was meant to show the population the effect of electrical power, to open a perspective on the future by way of electricity, and to present a symbol of light.<sup>32</sup> Other examples were used to make it clear that the ideas of socialism were being spread by the most modern means. The “Automobile of the Red Newspaper” appears again and again,<sup>33</sup> and a photo by Testis shows a cinematograph – a device for recording and replaying moving images – on an automobile (figs. 81 and 82).

Taken together, these examples make it clear that the photographs express how strong a hope for an immediate transition to socialism still existed. By mid-1918, following vehement debate within the party and in the public, the “left Communist” conception – namely, that socialism would not be achieved by way of state capitalism but rather by building on socialist means from the very beginning – had been largely adopted. “Socialist means” was understood to include a management system built on parity in thirds, planning from the bottom up, and the strengthening of self-initiatives. The political system should orient itself around these principles as well; all aspects of life had to be understood from the standpoint of the socialist idea. It was above all workers in factories that had experimented with forms of state capitalism who supported this conception in their strikes and demonstrations. They did not want to accept that the successes they had fought for and won in the Revolution would be reversed and a new form of capitalism introduced. Despite the current escalation of the civil war, which placed innumerable limitations on the measures that had been decided upon, enthusiasm was initially widespread that the goal had not been abandoned.

<sup>29</sup> On the general theme, see Heiko Haumann, *Beginn der Planwirtschaft: Elektrifizierung, Wirtschaftsplanung und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung Sowjetrusslands, 1917–1921* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1974).

<sup>30</sup> Döring, *Organisationsprobleme der russischen Wirtschaft in Revolution und Bürgerkrieg* (note 15), 144–49; Karl Schlögel, *Petersburg: Das Laboratorium der Moderne, 1909–1921*, rev. ed. (Munich and Vienna: Hanser Verlag, 2002), 353–407; Haumann, *Beginn der Planwirtschaft* (note 30), 36–40.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Photo No. W-15-b by Auxman, Photo Nos. W-22-a and b by various photographers.

<sup>32</sup> On a similar note, Karl Radek said that in 1920 an “electric current of confidence” ran through the rows of delegates at the Eighth Soviet Congress when the sites of the planned electrical plans were illuminated on a wall map; see Haumann, *Beginn der Planwirtschaft* (note 30), 170–71.

<sup>33</sup> See Photo No. W-11-a-606 by Tsenter, Photo No. W-13-b-542 by Vetsenberg, and Photo No. B-13-b-36 by Tsenter.



### The Commune

The openness of the revolutionary process becomes evident in the photographs, in that they depict not only a monument for Karl Marx<sup>34</sup> but also one for Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) (p. 89 and fig. 50) as well as the Lassalle House – the former building of the municipal parliament, the Duma (fig. 85).<sup>35</sup> Lassalle was one of the founders of German social democracy. His ideas, however, were much disputed by Marxists, and the Bolsheviks in particular did not consider themselves his heirs. Even so, at this point he was not yet suppressed. As other monuments from this period demonstrate, the whole rich variety of the international revolutionary movement was to be displayed as much as possible. Other photos confirm the impressions we have gained. There are no portraits, no pictorial photo paintings<sup>36</sup> but instead group photographs, documentations of parades, and so on. New ways of seeing can be identified, which may have influenced later discussions about photographic techniques to depict the new subject matter using forms that also made the viewer aware in appropriate ways.<sup>37</sup> Karpenko, for example, made oblique aerial photographs of columns of troops crossing the Square of the Fallen Heroes of the Revolution (Field of Mars) or Urtski Square (fig. 84). Many military units are represented in the parades, as are the soviets and the representatives of the Petrograd Commune. After

<sup>34</sup> See Photo No. W-07-a-740 by Bulla, Photo No. W-26-a-741 by Bulla and Photo No. W-26-a-917 by Sominova.

<sup>35</sup> See Photo No. W-08-a and Photo No. W-08-b by different photographers, Photo No. W-15-a-919 and Photo No. W-15-a-922 by Breitkas, Photo W-19-a-863 by Struinikov, and Photo No. B-14-b-19 by Bulla.

<sup>36</sup> See Alexandr Lavrentiev, *Piktoralismus und Moderne in der sowjetischen Fotografie der 20er- und 30er-Jahre*, in Susanne Winkler, ed., *Sowjetische Fotografie der 1920er-/1930er-Jahre: Von Piktoralismus und Modernismus zum Sozialistischen Realismus* (Vienna: Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 2000), 17–26.

<sup>37</sup> A good example of this might be the debates around Aleksandr Rodchenko's "new vision." See Inka Graeve, *Klassenaue versus Neues Sehen: Zur Rezeption sowjetischer Fotografie in Berlin*, in Antonova and Merkert, eds., *Berlin-Moskau / Moskva-Berlin* (note 4), 221–25; Margarita Tupitsyn, Alexander Rodtschenko: *Das Neue Moskau; Fotografien aus der Sammlung L. und G. Tatunz* (Munich, Paris, and London: Schirmer/Mosel, 1998), 7–19.



Fig. 90  
Testis  
Banner with the inscription "Moscow/Bern/Paris",  
Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 91  
Viktor Bulla  
Jewish organization, Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

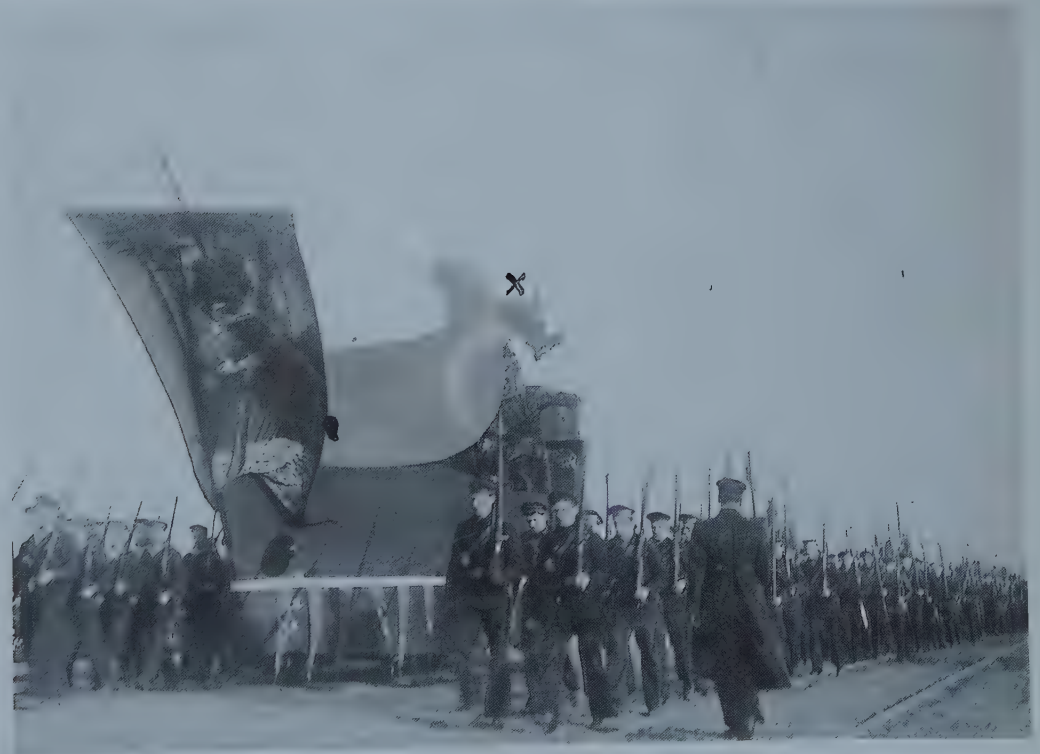


Fig. 92 und 93  
Yakob Steinberg  
Artificial boats, some of them carrying  
the "hydra of the counterrevolution",  
on Lieutenant Schmidt Bridge,  
Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



the government was moved from Petrograd to Moscow on 11 March 1918, for better protection against military attacks, the city of the Revolution organized as the "Petrograd Labor Commune," on the model of the Paris Commune. Its executive body was a council of the commissars that was responsible for the soviet; Zinovyev was elected its chair. This was followed a little later by the founding of the Union of the Communes of the Northern Region, which was intended, among other things, to improve the planning for economic development. At the same time the idea was to address seriously the goal of building "associations" from the bottom up.<sup>38</sup> Several photos show famous Communist politicians. Lunacharski appears frequently, usually together with members of the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment. A young woman is often seen next to him. This may be Maria Fyodorovna Andreyeva (1868–1953), a former actress whom Lunacharski had made head of the theater department (fig. 51 and p. 84).<sup>39</sup> One photo, taken by Tsenter, shows several commissars of the Petrograd Commune: (1) Zinovyev; (2) Lunacharski; (3) Boris P. Pozern (1882–1939; military affairs); (4) Grigori E. Yevdokimov (1884–1936; vice chair); (5) Ionov; (6) Zlata Lilina (societal affairs), (7)

M. Lisovski; (8) Semyon (Samuil) P. Voskov (supply); (9) Sara (Olga) N. Ravich (1879–1957; domestic affairs).<sup>40</sup> (fig. 86) Lenin was not in Petrograd for the celebrations of the Revolution in 1918 because he was participating in the festivities in Moscow.

Steinberg photographed a scene in which our gaze is led up a festively decorated staircase to a wall. On the left a sign reads "1917–1918"; on the right, "Volodarski Hall";<sup>41</sup> and in the middle, specially decorated with foliage and a flag (red, presumably), is a portrait of Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919), the leader of the German Communist Party, who personified the hopes for a socialist revolution in Germany (fig. 87).<sup>42</sup> In the photos from 1919 Naum M. Antselovich (1888–1952), an important member of the party and of the trade unions who had been given the task of directing the celebrations, can be seen (fig. 88).<sup>43</sup> Delegations of workers' associations and other regional and societal groups marched in the celebrations; envoys from Lithuania and Latvia can be identified; and last but not least there were units of firefighters. Flags and banners reproduced principal slogans. On 1 May 1919 there are "Representatives of the Soviet Region of Germany" present (fig. 89), also photographed by Bulla. These are probably members of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, joined by released war prisoners from the First World War. They represent the hope for a world revolution – at a time, however, when these hopes were increasingly disappearing. At the time the photo was taken, the soldiers of the Bavarian Soviet Republic were desperately battling the better-prepared Freikorps and

<sup>38</sup> See Mary McAuley, *Bread and Justice: State and Society in Petrograd, 1917–1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 142–53; Döring, *Organisationsprobleme der russischen Wirtschaft in Revolution und Bürgerkrieg* (note 15), 96–100. The Manifesto of the Communist Party, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, declares: "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 491.

<sup>39</sup> McAuley, *Bread and Justice* (note 38), 145; Geir Kjetsaa, *Maxim Gorki. Eine Biographie* (Hildesheim: Claassen, 1996), 104, 115, 151, 155 ff., 162, 167 ff., 171, 184 ff., 202, 215, 276. Andreyeva was long active in social democracy, became a colleague of Lenin, and for several years was Maxim Gorki's companion.

<sup>40</sup> Information on the individuals is taken from McAuley, *Bread and Justice* (note 39), 31, 142–53, 431–36. Not all of the first names could be established. Lunacharski was People's Commissar both on the level of the Republic and in the Commune. McAuley does not specify what sort of commissars Ionov and Lisovski were. Zlata Lilina was Zinovyev's wife, whom he left for Sara Ravich. For Pozern, see also Photo No. B-08-a-75 and Photo No. B-08-a-76 by Testis.

<sup>41</sup> Moisei M. Volodarski (1891–1918) was the Commissar for Press and Agitation of the Petrograd Commune; he was murdered in that city on 20 June 1918 by a social revolutionary. Several of the photos in the album recall this. A street was renamed after him, as well as a division of the Red Army (Photo No. B-12-b-3).

<sup>42</sup> On 9 November 1918 Liebknecht proclaimed a "free socialist republic" in Berlin. On 15 January 1919 he was murdered, along with Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919).

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Photo No. B-13-a-114 by Testis. Brief biographical information is found in McAuley, *Bread and Justice* (note 39), 431.

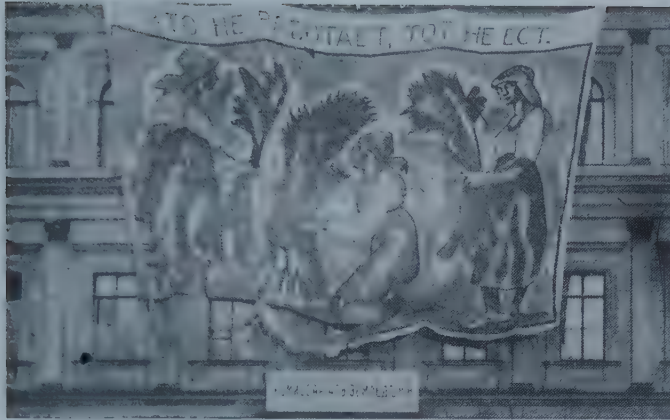


Fig. 94  
Testis  
Office of the Commissar for Agriculture of the  
"Union of the Communes of the Northern Area"  
with a banner reading "He who does not work does not eat!",  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 95  
Viktor Bulla  
Elements of temporary decorations in front  
of the former Admiralty,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

regular troops in Munich. On 3 May 1919 Munich would be in the hands of the "Whites" and a terrible massacre of "Reds" would begin. Of particular interest is the photo that was probably taken by Testis during the parades on 1 May 1919. One group is holding up a three-color flag that has the names of three cities: "Moscow, Bern, Paris" (fig. 90). This sort of Swiss presence is surprising. Unfortunately the context is not evident from the photo. Is the flag evidence of the presence of a Swiss delegation? Does it refer to Switzerland's importance as a site to which many Russian revolutionaries emigrated? Or is it connected with the Third International?

In 1919 Bulla also photographed the "Jewish Organization" – as the caption identifies it (fig. 91). But which one is meant? The flags are decorated with a "Shield of David" and, in Hebrew, such principal slogans as "Workers of all countries, unite"<sup>44</sup> and "Long live the workers' dictatorship of all countries" and a salute to the First of May. Unfortunately, an important line on the left flag cannot be deciphered entirely: "[...] Association of Communists [...], Palestine." Could this have been a delegation of Jewish Communists from Palestine? It is quite possible. The "Shield of David" would be difficult to explain, however, since the Communists in Palestine tried to organize Jews and Arabs together.<sup>45</sup> Or is this one of the many splinter groups of socialist Jewish parties showing its support for the Bolsheviks? The appearance of Hebrew suggests it was not one of the groups from the circle of the "Bund," that is, the General Jewish Worker's Union in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia or the Jewish section of the Communist Party, as these tended to use Yiddish to appeal to the Jewish population. It was possibly a leftist Zionist organization, like the Jewish Communist Party/Poale Zion. This group had separated from the larger party, welcomed the October Revolution, sought acceptance into the Com-

<sup>44</sup> Perhaps Hebrew did not yet have a word for "proletarians".

<sup>45</sup> Vgl. Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party, 1919–1948: Arab and Jew in the Struggle for Internationalism* (London: Ithaca Press, 1979).





Fig. 96  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Sketch for the decorations at the celebrations in Saint Petersburg,  
Liteini Prospect, 1918  
Watercolor and indian ink on paper, 62 x 47 cm  
State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg



Fig. 97  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Sketch for the decorations at the celebrations in Saint Petersburg,  
Okhtinski-Bridge, 1918  
Watercolor and indian ink on paper, 33 x 22 cm  
State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg

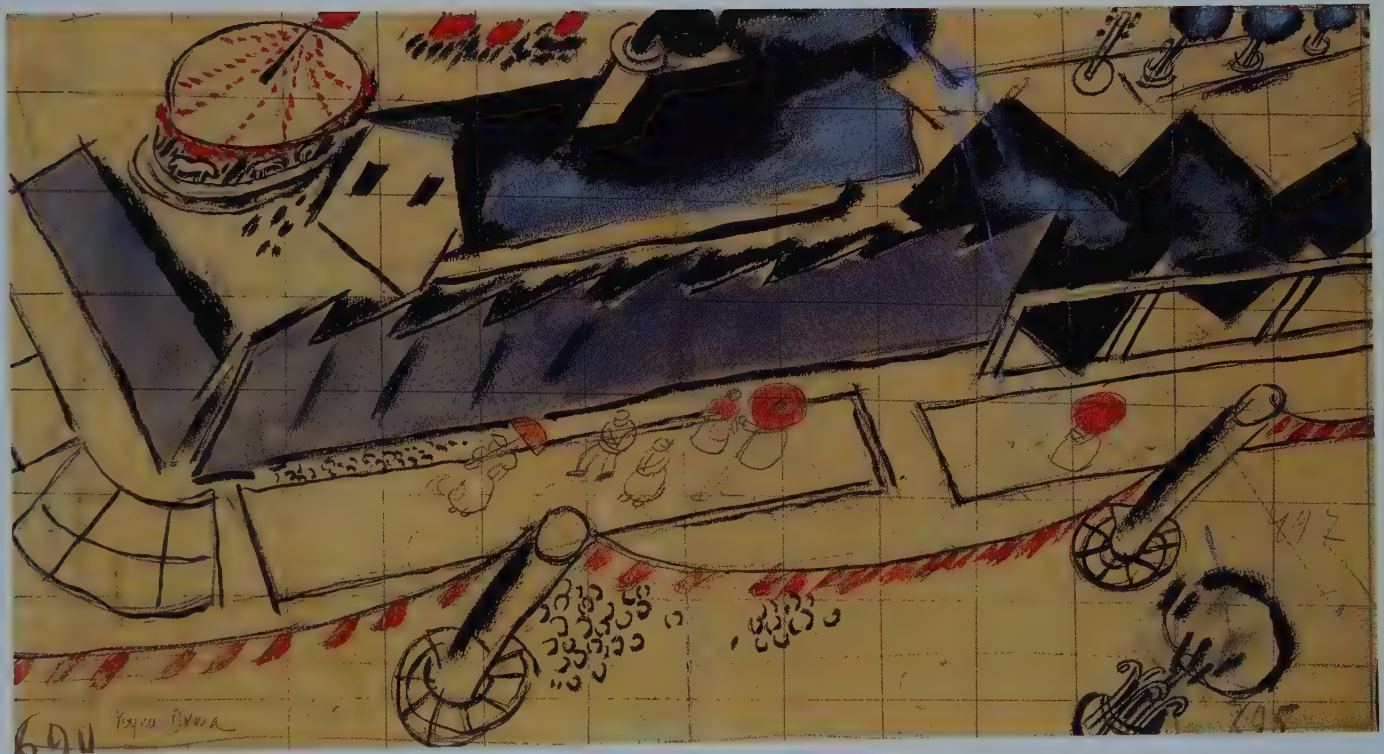


Fig. 98  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Armed workers in a car. Sketch for the decorations at the celebrations in Saint Petersburg, Liteini Prospect, 1918  
Watercolor and indian ink on paper, 38 x 34 cm  
State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg

Fig. 99  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Sketch for the decorations at the celebrations in Saint Petersburg, Okhtinski Bridge, 1918  
Watercolor and indian ink on two sheets of paper, 29 x 24 cm (left sheet), 28 x 26 cm (right sheet)  
State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg



munist International, and at the same time was working to build a socialist Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>46</sup>

### *Theater and Reality*

In 1919 the theatrical element in the parades was much more pronounced than it had been in 1918. Sailors built artificial ships on which they rode through the city. One of Steinberg's photographs shows them on the "Lieutenant Schmidt Bridge" (fig. 92), and another shows a ship carrying the "Hydra of the Counterrevolution" (fig. 93). Much of this theater seems aggressive, especially when it concerns the civil war. In 1918 another feature dominated: on 23 October 1918 important artists were asked to decorate certain parts of the city for the anniversary of the October Revolution.<sup>47</sup> This decision was part of the schemes and measures that Lenin and Lunacharski developed in 1918, which drew on ideas from the utopian sketch *Civitas solis* (City of the sun; 1602) by Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639). Monuments, frescos, signs with principal slogans, and celebrations were to effect *monumental propaganda* and make a contribution to the education of the population.<sup>48</sup>

When looking at the photos, one is struck by the numerous decorations and paintings along the streets and in

squares. Large banners were attached to houses or set up on squares, with a wide variety of motifs and slogans. The Commissariat for Agriculture, for example, depicted three peasant women working, with the message above them "Anyone who does not work, will not eat" (fig. 94). Zirit photographed a banner in front of the building that formerly housed the Hall of the Army and Navy that was supposed to symbolize the R.S.F.S.R., the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (fig. 2). Globes that represent the universe are seen in front of the Admiralty (fig. 95).<sup>49</sup> None of the photographs in the albums show the decorations for the Okhtinski Bridge, a task that had been conferred on Ivan Puni, only his sketches have survived (figs. 96–99).<sup>50</sup> The organization Proletkult also took part in the decoration. In the decree of 23 October 1918 just discussed, the group was assigned Manezhnaya Square. The photographer Magatsiner took a photo of the entrance to a building in which several people were holding signs for the Proletkult. In the foreground poses a man in uniform with a white armband – the insignia is not identifiable, perhaps he is a parade overseer or an ambulance driver – who is holding a cup. The two columns are decorated with depictions of two artists. Looking like depictions of saints – in particular, they evoke apostles – a painter and, presumably, an author, who holds a scroll in his arms like a baby, stand against the backdrop of a city. The backdrop continues with dwellings and smokestacks above the entrance, and above it all is written in large letters: "Proletkult" (fig. 101). In keeping with the view that the proletariat would have to create socialism itself, the proletarians were also supposed to create their own socialist culture that was connected to their

<sup>46</sup> As with so many aspects of these photo albums, additional research would be useful here. We still know far too little about the reformation of Jewish organizations that took place after 1917. See Walter Kaufmann, *'Der Kampf um die jüdische Strasse': Die Politik der Jüdischen Sektionen der Kommunistischen Partei am Beispiel Odessas, 1920–1925; Vorgeschichte und Verlauf*, unpublished master's thesis (Berlin: Freie Universität, 1994), 41–52; Zvi Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics: The Jewish Sections of the CPSU, 1917–1930* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), 216–17; and idem, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present* (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 108–13.

<sup>47</sup> Tolstoj, *Agitacionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 19), 1:58–65; Tolstoj, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution* (note 20), 69–70. On symbolism in the early Soviet period, with particular reference to celebrations, see Paola Pitton, *Semiotik der Macht: Ein Vergleich der Herrschaft Peters I. und der frühen Bolschewiki*, unpublished Lizenz thesis (Basel: Universität Basel, 1998), 40 ff.

<sup>48</sup> Tolstoj, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution* (note 20), 12–15, 35, and the documents and illustrations on 38–120; see also the Russian edition – Tolstoj, *Agitacionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 20) – which has separate volumes for the documents and the illustrations.

<sup>49</sup> This is just a small selection of many photos. The following seem particularly interesting to me: Photo No. W-14-a-580 by Magatsiner; Photo No. W-14-b-598 by Lonniski (fig. 100); Photo No. W-14-b-759 by Petersen; and Photo No. W-27-b by Tsenter with photographs of the Red Army.

<sup>50</sup> Tolstoj, *Agitacionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 20), 1:59, and vol. 2, no. 67; Tolstoj, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution* (note 20), 69, 96 no. 64.



Fig. 100  
Lonniski  
Decoration of the Cr dit Lyonnais building,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

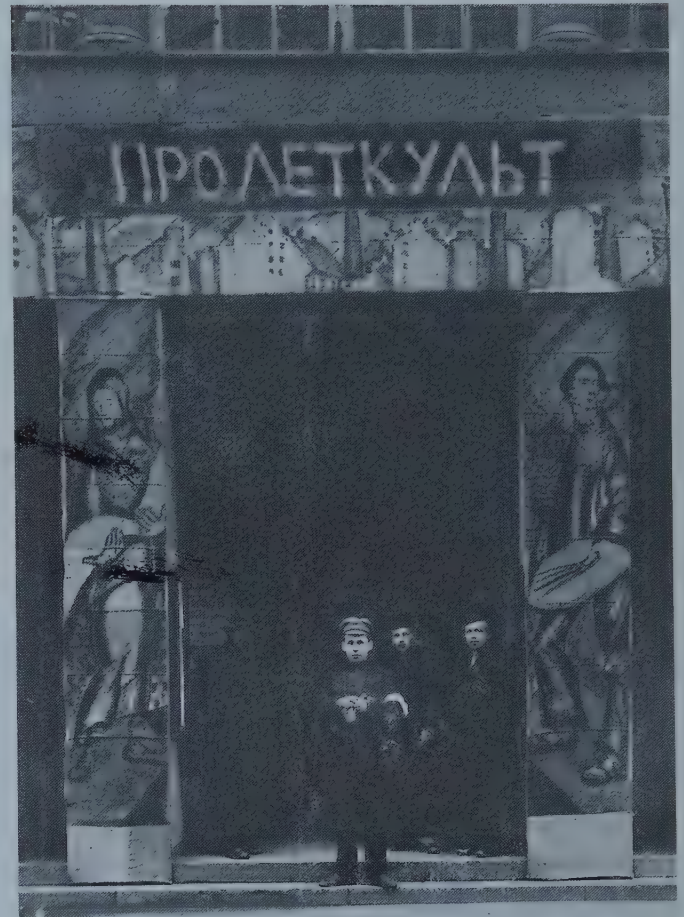


Fig. 101 (rechts oben)  
Magasiner  
Decorations for the Proletkult,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 102 (rechts unten)  
Magasiner  
Decorations at the Mikhailovski-Arena with the  
inscription Altar to Freedom and Revolution,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



daily lives and work.<sup>51</sup> The influences of artistic traditions in this photo are thus all the more astonishing. Religious models can be seen elsewhere as well. The album with the Revolution anniversary celebrations contains a photo by Magatsiner that, according to the caption, shows the decoration for the Mikhailovski Manege (fig. 102).<sup>52</sup> In the arches between the columns are seen two groups of three naked men. One group is involved in heavy work – it seems as if they are trying to move something by pulling a thick rope; the other is clearly struggling with a snake. The influences of antiquity are unmistakable, in particular to the Laocoön group from the first century A.D. Beneath each group are the words: “Altar of Freedom and Revolution”. Utekhin photographed the decorations that Boris M. Kustodiyev (1878–1927) did for Rucheynaya Square. They consist of paintings of a woman selling vegetables, a baker, a tailor, and a carpenter (fig. 52–55). The painted fabric is very high, fastened between two tall poles. The captions in the album refer to them as “church banners of labor.”<sup>53</sup> The second album devotes particular attention to honoring those who died in the Revolution. Petrovski photographed several scenes on the Square of the Fallen Heroes of the Revolution (Field of Mars) that appear with the caption: “As they pass the graves of the freedom fighters, all of the civil and military organizations lower their flags to pay their respects.”<sup>54</sup> There are many photos of these processions, including groups of children and young people (figs.

113 and 114). Frequently the men have removed their hats and bowed their heads.<sup>55</sup>

Petrograd became a stage.<sup>56</sup> The photos for the celebrations are impressive evidence of the way that spaces were reoccupied. At the same time, overwhelmingly, the people moved spontaneously on that stage. There are no self-contained masses moving in formation, directed by a central organization.<sup>57</sup> Even when the demonstration parades recall processions, the people do not seem disciplined; they do not march in step. The body language of Stalinism is not yet evident. Rather, when examined precisely as sources of the first rank and placed within the context of their time, the photos from 1918 and 1919 emphasize impressions of openness, variety, spontaneity, fascination, and hopes that are still closely tied to the socialist utopia. Despite all the torments, a happy future seems close at hand. For many people the utopias had a connection to reality, opening up a workable perspective. Just a few years later this would change fundamentally.<sup>58</sup>

51 See Lorenz, *Proletarische Kulturrevolution in Sowjetrußland* (note 29); Peter Gorsen and Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, *Proletkult*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstadt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1974/75); Gabriele Gorzka, A. Bogdanov und der russische Proletkult: Theorie und Praxis einer sozialistischen Kulturrevolution (Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus-Verlag, 1980); Lynn Mally, *Culture of the Future: The Proletkult Movement in Revolutionary Russia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1990).

52 According to the decree, they were designed by the artist A. B. Regelson; see Tolstoj, *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 20), 1:59.

53 The Russian is “khorugvi truda.” Khorugvi could also be translated as “flag” or “war flag” but the design is more reminiscent of banners from church processions. See the sketches for Kustodiyev’s series in Tolstoj, *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 20), vol. 2, nos. 43–47; Tolstoj, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution* (note 20), 93 no. 57.

54 Photo Nos. B-09-b-164–167; see also many other such illustrations in this album.

55 For example, Photo No. B-16-a-96 by Testis; all the photos on this page of the album are relevant.

56 This transformation of Petrograd into a stage for the celebrations of the revolution in 1920 has become famous. See the illustrations in the two documentary volumes in note 20 – Tolstoj, *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* and Tolstoj, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution* – and Schlögel, *Petersburg* (note 31), 453–504.

57 See the illustrations of the later mass scenes in the two documentary volumes in note 20 – Tolstoj, *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* and Tolstoj, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution*. That the people seem more relaxed may also be connected to the fact that special food rations were issued on the occasion of the celebrations; see Photo No. W-13-b-500 by Antokolski (fig. XX) and Photo No. W-13-b-772 by Petersen.

58 See Heiko Haumann, *Utopie einer herrschaftsfreien Gesellschaft und Praxis gewalthafter Verhältnisse: Offene Fragen zur Erforschung der Frühgeschichte Sowjetrußlands, 1917–1921*, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 34 (1994): 19–34. The present essay is, of course, just a first approach to the rich variety of photographs in the two albums. They await a more detailed assessment, for which the analysis of the sources would have to be worked out in detail.



Fig. 103  
Antokolski  
Load of bread, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

## Revolution and Carnival

In addition to such nerve centers of the state as palaces or parliaments, revolutionary regimes always occupy those public spaces in which the former political powers had shown themselves. Cities have long been the preferred stages of the powerful, and consequently also the sites of change for entire systems of symbolism. If one is looking for these sorts of models for the October Revolution in Russia, the French Revolution, with its monumental projects by the likes of Etienne-Louis Boullée (1728–1799) and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806),<sup>59</sup> is not the only one. At least since Peter the Great (1672–1725) – who in a very brief period at the beginning of the eighteenth century constructed in the marshy Baltic Sea delta of the Neva a new capital city that would bear the name of his patron saint – Russia's leaders knew how to turn urban spaces into stages to display their power and greatness.

As in France in 1789 so in revolutionary Russia in the years after 1917 did the preoccupation of symbolic spaces go along with putting symbolic time to service. Among the first steps taken by the Bolsheviks were the elimination of the Julian calendar in favor of the Gregorian calendar used in western Europe and the replacement of Christian holidays with those of the new, so-called Red calendar.<sup>60</sup> Of the Soviet holidays, which grew in number as the years passed, two had a prestige similar to that of Easter and Christmas here: Labor Day (1 May) and Revolution Day (25 October or 7 November). The photographs in our exhibition are dedicated to both events, the celebration of May Day and that of the anniversary of the Revolution, in Petrograd in 1918 and 1919. All of the images are connected by a common motif that can be expressed in this formula: How the

<sup>59</sup> See Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 433 ff.

<sup>60</sup> See Christel Lane, *The Rites of the Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society; The Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 289–90.



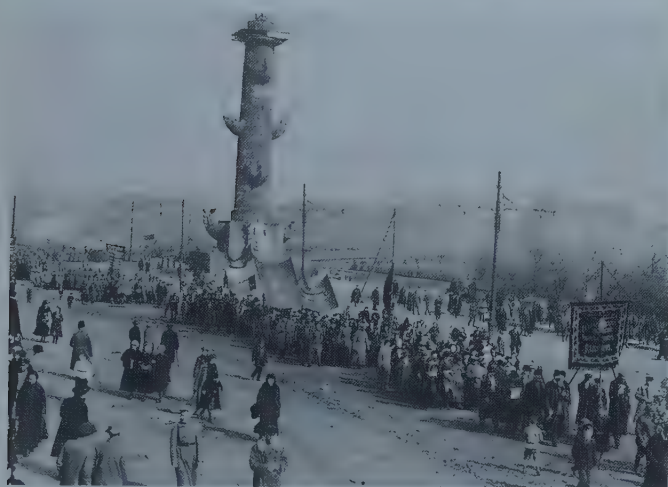


Fig. 104 (left above)  
Sergeev  
Parade on Labor Square, Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 105 (center left)  
Anonymous photographer  
from the Petrograd Photography and  
Cinema Committee (FoKK)  
Procession passing the stock exchange on its way  
to Heroes of the Revolution Square,  
Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 106 (left below)  
Klimovitch  
Members of the Wolost-executive-committees,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Fig. 107 (right above)  
Anonymous photographer from  
the Petrograd Photography and Cinema Committee (FoKK)  
Veiled equestrian statue of Nicolas I on Mariinsky Square,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

masses took possession of the spaces of power of a large city.

For both aristocratic and bourgeois Europe – we need only mention the names of Friedrich Nietzsche, Gustave Le Bon, José Ortega y Gasset, and Karl Jaspers – the phenomenon of the masses had become increasingly suspect since the nineteenth century. This was not the case in Russia, where, with vital support from the medium of photography, the self-perception of the masses as a power played an essential part in their political mobilization. From a socialist perspective, the superiority of the masses over the (bourgeois) individual does not derive so much from their large numbers. Rather, what matters is that the socialist masses are supposed to confront, as a collective with organization, self-confidence, and solidarity, the faceless and powerless masses that capitalism always produces in its industrial centers and then marginalizes socially with the same regularity. Now the masses, as the new agent of history, were to appropriate symbolically the former capital of Russia. Anatoli V. Lunacharski, the first Commissar for Enlightenment, who is seen again and again in our photos, remarked on the occasion of the celebration in Petrograd on 1 May 1918: “Is not the very idea fascinating that the State, which until now has been our worst enemy, now belongs to us and celebrates May Day as its greatest holiday? If this holiday were merely an official occasion, merely cold and hollow, it would not be enough. No, the masses of the people, the Red Navy, the Red Army – the whole of the people who truly work have lent their energies to this day.”<sup>61</sup>

The state and the people, according to the pathos of these lines, became one with the October Revolution, and celebrations like that for May Day should symbolically reinforce this unity. Lenin’s model for organizing the masses was, though originally conceived as a dialectical relationship of base and leadership, more or

less functionally and thus hierarchically conceived. The proletariat was the elite of the classes, the party the elite of the masses, the party leadership the elite of the elite. Stalin expanded and adapted this model into a system that even by the early 1930s had taken on oligarchic features that would ultimately turn autocratic. The masses were configured accordingly. The merciless symmetry of the solid blocks of marching Red Army soldiers, unionists, and athletes corresponded to the brown formations that Hitler and Goebbels liked to watch on Berlin’s Unter den Linden or on the grounds of the Reich’s party convention in Nuremberg, like tin soldiers they had set in motion. The masses shown in the present photographs are far from being ossified in ornament in this way.<sup>62</sup> The parades always seem to fray at the edges or lose intensity and kinetic energy in the middle (fig. 104 and 105).<sup>63</sup> Not infrequently the enormous squares and streets of Petrograd feel like stages that have grown too large for the *dramatis personae*. The body of the masses and the space of the city are insufficiently coordinated, and in any case they are far from the choreography familiar to us from the films of Sergei Eisenstein, who made the revolutionary masses fit into the spaces of the city-streets, bridges, stairways, and promenades – as if into a hand – tailored suit. In these photos the gestures and poses, strides and gazes of the crowds synchronized at most even in the marching military units, and even there not nearly as perfectly as in the centipedes of later parades for May Day, Victory Day, and Revolution Day on Red Square in Moscow. Many of the civilians give the impression that they might have joined a parade spontaneously and not on higher authority. The camerawork in many of the photos accentuates the faces of the participants. Sometimes groups of figures are shot from the conventional perspective of posed group portraits from the

<sup>61</sup> Tolstoj, *Agitatsionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 20), 1:47; Tolstoy, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution* (note 20), 51.

<sup>62</sup> See Siegfried Kracauer, *Das Ornament der Masse* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 50 ff.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. photo no. B-02-b-45-47 by Tsenter and Sergeev as well as Photo No. B-05-b-207-12 by the photographer of the Photograph and Cinema Committee (FoKK).



turn of the century, which stands in the tradition of the *tableau vivant* (fig. 106).<sup>64</sup> The effect is to make every figure individually identifiable, as if in a class photo. It does not so much resemble a demonstration for or against something but rather a display of participation in the Revolution: And I was there!"

The contrast between incapacitated masses of Stalinist dramatizations of state power and the mass functions of the early Soviet period has in recent histories of Russian culture been described using concepts like "carnivalization" and "culture of laughter" that we owe to the theoretician of culture Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), who himself fell into disfavor under Stalin. The term "culture of laughter" refers to a system of values and images that are counter to those of the official culture, which is achieved through sublimation. This system is expressed above all in the rites of carnival, which repeat according to the calendar. The authorities of the society step down for a limited time to make room for a counterregime of mockery, satire, and the grotesque, which in turn is replaced by the asceticism of the fast: "The feast was a temporary suspension of the entire official system with all its prohibitions and hierarchic barriers. For a short time life came out of its usual, legalized and consecrated furrows and entered the sphere of utopian freedom. The very brevity of this freedom increased its fantastic nature and utopian radicalism, born in the festive atmosphere of images."<sup>65</sup>

For viewers today, especially non-Russians, this thesis may not seem especially illuminating, as the thing to which the image itself is a counter is usually absent: the typical, authoritative symbols of the old regime. In several cases, however, the disappearance of the old symbols and the introduction of new ones is truly dramatized by symbolic gestures of covering and uncovering. Compare, for example, the equestrian statue of Nicholas I (1825–1855) that stood in front of Saint Isaac's Cathedral in Petrograd (fig. 107), concealed in



Fig. 108  
Dmitriev-triumphal arch, Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 109  
Anonymous photographer from the Petrograd  
Photography and Cinema Committee (FoKK)  
Painting flags and posters in Smolny  
(seat of the revolutionary government),  
Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

<sup>64</sup> Cf. also photo no. B-07-b-9 and photo no. B-11-a-8.

<sup>65</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984), 89.



Fig. 110  
Zenter  
Demonstration on Uritskii Square for the first anniversary  
of the revolution, with Alexander Column and  
Natan Altman's tribune,  
Saint Petersburg, 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

our photos and later taken down, whose historical motifs on its pedestal made it a kind of “propaganda center of religious and monarchist ideas,”<sup>66</sup> with the unveiling of the Petrograd monument to Karl Marx. Another strategy of “counterimages” can be seen in the renaming of public streets, squares, and buildings. For example, the Petersburg Stock Exchange became the Sailor’s Club; the Assembly of the Nobility became the House of the People; and the venerable Dvortsovaya Square of Petersburg was renamed Uritskii Square after the head of the Petrograd section of the Cheka (a nickname for the secret service, from the Russian acronym, VChK), who was murdered in 1918.<sup>67</sup> An especially prominent “countersymbol” of the revolutionary celebrations, though not revealed to us by the black-and-white photographs, is the red of the thousands of posters, banners, streamers, and garlands. An eyewitness to the Moscow celebrations of May Day in 1918 reported, “Lubyanka Square was swamped in red. The countless silk, velvet and other banners, embroidered with sequins and glass beads were quite dazzling to the eye. One focus of attention was the metal workers’ vehicle, draped in red material and bearing a huge globe with a portrait of Marx on it.”<sup>68</sup> In the context of the October Revolution, the red symbolized, on the one hand, the blood of the victims from the Russian proletariat. For example, in the early 1920s the square at Narvskaya Gate, which had been built in 1834 on the boulevard leading from Oranienbaum to Saint Petersburg, was repaved with red stones. They were intended as a reminder “that it was here on 9 January 1905 that the czarist troops shot down a peaceful demonstration, and the blood of the workers flowed.”<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, the red of the flags and banners, as a symbol of the pulsing blood of the working class, contrasted the vitality of the revolutionary principle not just with the gray of the large cities but also with the

<sup>66</sup> *Leningrad: Putevoditel'* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1970), 189.

<sup>67</sup> See note 17.

<sup>68</sup> Tolstoy, Bibikova, and Cooke, *Street Art of the Revolution* (note 20), 49.

<sup>69</sup> *Leningrad: Putevoditel'* (note 67), 337.



white that symbolized the counterrevolution. For the first anniversary of the Revolution, a cubo-futurist monument of wood and papier-mâché was set up in Moscow, showing an enormous red wedge splitting a marble block with the legend "White Guard gangs."<sup>70</sup> For the Revolution anniversary celebrations, Narvskaya Gate in Petrograd was draped with two banners, showing a worker and a peasant on a monumental scale on each side of the arch (p. 95). At the apex of the gate hung resplendent a slogan that might have been accepted in Leipzig or Berlin in 1989: "We are the power." The contrast between the early nineteenth-century neoclassical triumphal arch (Corinthian columns, quadriga, and coffered arch) and the political decoration of the Revolution throws in focus that which has been called the carnivalistic principle of the early Soviet Union's way of portraying itself. Precisely the tension between the symbolic language of the old regime and the new (baroque and neoclassical architecture of power, on the one hand, and cubism, on the other), which, characteristically, will be eliminated under Stalinism, justifies distinguishing between the democratic "culture of laughter" of the early Soviet Union from the authoritarian culture of power of the postrevolutionary era. This aesthetic difference can also be seen in the use of artificial, decorative, proplike triumphal arches decorated with emblems of Soviet power (fig. 108).

Masquerade and covering, just as much as unmasking and revealing, are the universal means of carnival. The word travesty, which in its literal sense is related to the word covering, can also be used to describe the activities that are especially well documented in two photos: the making of monumental posters by leading representatives of the avant-garde – such as Ivan Puni, Natan Altman (1889–1970), and David Sterenberg (1881–

1948) – in the studios of Smolni, the seat of the provisional government, in May 1918 (fig. 109 and p. 96). Another photo shows Altman's redesign for Petrograd Castle and Uritski Square for the celebrations of the Revolution's first anniversary (p. 90). Altman covered a full row of trees on the square and the pedestal of the statue of Alexander, which was to serve as a rostrum, with three-dimensional cubist forms (fig. 110). An enormous three-dimensional banner that was to conceal the group of trees shone with the red letters of the slogan "Proletarians of all countries, unite."<sup>71</sup> Here and on most of the streets, bridges, and squares of Moscow and Petrograd was realized what Vladimir Mayakovsky, the bard of the Revolution, had called for in his poem *Order to the Army of Art* in 1918: "Streets are our brush,/Squares our palettes."

Mayakovsky's own contribution to the 1918 celebrations in Petrograd of the Revolution was the comedy *Mysterium buffo*. It was premiered on 7 November, with Vsevolod Meyerhold as director and stage designs by Kazimir Malevich. In a colorful mixture of elements of the satirical revue, of popular theater, of the circus, and the political meeting, the principle of a revolutionary culture of laughter was put on stage, thereby founding a circuslike tradition that would leave its mark on both Soviet theater and Soviet film<sup>72</sup> until the early 1930s. What would later make history under the name "October Theater" developed less in the protected spaces of the traditional temple to the muses than in the squares and prospects of Moscow and Petrograd (fig. 111). This is particularly true of the great mass spectacles of the civil war period, with as many as twenty thousand participants, which were organized primarily by the Proletkult organization and supported by units of the Red Army. The plays had titles such as *Hymn to*

<sup>70</sup> Tolstoj, *Agitacionno-massovoe iskusstvo* (note 20), vol. 2, nos. 134 and 135. See also the very similar design of El Lisitski's famous revolutionary poster from 1919–20: *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, reproduced in Antonio del Guercio, *Russische Avantgarde von Marc Chagall bis Kasimir Malewitsch* (Herrsching: Pawlak, 1988), pl. 49.

<sup>71</sup> Photo No. W-20-a-946 by Bulla.

<sup>72</sup> See Christine Engel, *Geschichte des sowjetischen Films* (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1999), 20 ff.



Fig. 111  
Yakob Steinberg  
Open-air theater performance,  
Petrograd, circa 1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel



Fig. 112  
Viktor Bulla  
Uritski Square, Petrograd, 8 November  
1918  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

*Liberated Labor, Toward the World Commune, The Storming of the Winter Palace, or The Blockade of Russia.* "Each of these dramatizations is an experiment; all of them taken together reveal the elements that can be understood as bringing both revolution to the theater and the theater to life."<sup>73</sup> The people were ultimately supposed to make dramatizations of this sort – that is, the theater as institution – superfluous. The people would be subject and object at once, the actors and the audience of the performance, thereby overcoming an opposition that both the drama of Russian symbolism and the later theatrical works of the Russian avant-garde directors Vsevolod Meyerhold and Sergei Eisenstein had also tried to eliminate.

A distinct feature of early Soviet celebrations of the revolution was their aesthetic syncretism. Unity of style, however that is understood, was neither possible nor desirable. Choreographic elements taken from church processions are mixed with those taken from army or naval parades (figs. 92 and 93). The dramaturgy of the crowd or the mass meeting has an equal place alongside elements of Mardi Gras. Examples of the latter include the satirical revues and posters as well as the parades with decorated trucks that, on the model of the famous Potyomkin villages, were made to look like tanks or "Galleries of the Counterrevolution". It is not difficult to recognize the similarity between these trucks and the floats of very different parades like Carnival in Rio de Janeiro and the Love Parade in Berlin. In these early Soviet celebrations of the Revolution highly varied styles, forms, and cultural gestures seem to coexist more or less peacefully and, by means of that variety, evolve as a carnivalistic, and hence democratic, potential. As we move away in time from the events that our photos document, the more these things are suppressed by images of homogeneous masses who have but one director and one audience: the general

<sup>73</sup> Karl Schlögel, *Jenseits des Grossen Oktober: Das Laboratorium der Moderne; Petersburg, 1909–1921* (Berlin: Siedler, 1988), 358; see also the works cited in note 52 of this essay.



secretary of the party and his closest confidants, who until the end of the Soviet Union would smile stonily down from the rostrum of Lenin's mausoleum in Moscow to extend their blessings on the masses marching past.<sup>74</sup>



Fig. 113 und 114  
Petrovski  
Red Infantry parade past the tribunes  
and the graves of those who fell in  
the revolution,  
Saint Petersburg, 1919  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

<sup>74</sup> See Rosalinde Sartori, *Stalinism and Carnival*, in Hans Günther, ed., *The Culture of the Stalin Period* (London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 41–77.

Herman Berninger

# **Art in Service of the New Society** Ivan Puni's Futurist Shop Signs for Public Spaces in Petrograd, 1917–1918



Fig. 115  
Clipping from a Saint Petersburg periodical with  
a review of the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings  
'Tramway V'" and reproductions of works by V. Klyun,  
K. Malevich, X. Boguslavskaya, and I. Puni, 1915  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

When the First World War broke out in the summer of 1914 Ivan Puni, who was staying in Paris with his wife, Xana Boguslavskaya, returned to Saint Petersburg, which from then on, for patriotic reasons, would be called Petrograd. He was forced to conclude that deep animosities and rivalries reigned among his colleagues in the avant-garde, even if they were all seeking the same goal: namely, to shake up the ossified and asocial czarist society and introduce reforms to bring about a modern, progressive community.

It was Puni's service to history at this time to mediate between artists who had become enemies and to bring them together again and to use the two shocking exhibitions he had organized, the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 'Tramway V'" in March 1915 and the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" in December 1915 and January 1916, to help the reunited Russian avant-garde to achieve a colossal succès de scandale. An aesthetic revolution, a historical peak of High Modernism that would prove to be a forerunner of the political revolution of 1917.

The years 1915 and 1916 were the high point of the heroic Russian avant-garde. When the Bolsheviks took power, these artists were commissioned for propaganda tasks like street decorations and celebrations of anniversaries, and thus forced into a political function. Until very recently, with the coming of perestroika, the best known works in Puni's oeuvre were those between 1914 and 1916, that is, his autonomous artworks that were recorded in the catalogs for the exhibitions "Tramway V" and "0.10" and in the many newspaper reviews of those exhibitions.

Puni's work from 1917 to 1920 – the year in which he left Russia clandestinely, after recognizing very early that the Soviet regime would make free creative work impossible – remained largely unknown to posterity as a consequence of the terrible time of civil war, hunger, and cold in which it was created.<sup>1</sup> My tireless research

<sup>1</sup> Elena Jukowa, the head curator at the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, commented on this in 1993, in her *Punis Zeichnungen für das Buch von Nikolai Jewreinow, Das Theater für sich* in Jean-Louis Andral, Jean-Claude Marcadé, and Marie-Anne Chambost, eds., *Jean Pougny, 1892–1956*,



since the early 1990s has led to surprising new discoveries that have been collected in the second Russian room of the Puni exhibition in Basel. It turned out that after the October Revolution, when Anatoli Lunacharski, the commissar of enlightenment, appointed Puni professor at the reformed art academy, Puni had lent his talents to the modernization of public spaces.

Because illiteracy had been high in the Russian population for centuries, there was a tradition of making painted advertising signs of all kinds for stores, artisan's shops, restaurants—in short, retail businesses. Their long history has been discussed in the interesting book *Russian Painted Shop Signs and Avant-Garde Artists* by Yevgeni F. Kovtun, the late vice director of the State Russian Museum in Saint Petersburg, and his co-author Alla Povelikhina, and documented with many illustrations and historical photographs.

At least in the euphoric atmosphere of the early years, the new rulers wanted to see the new spirit, the hope for an ambitious, better time, heralded on new advertising signs in the modern, futuristic style. Puni contributed a series of commissioned works of timeless modernity, which, though certainly examples of Russian abstraction, should not be understood as the author's autonomous artistic reactions but rather as an avant-garde, but craft contribution to the renewal and revival of the public atmosphere. The viewer must imagine these lively, intelligent advertisements and their signallike effect in the surroundings for which they were created: in a carpenter's workshop, in pharmacies, in music shops, tobacconists, gambling halls, spice shops, clock and weapons shops, cooperages, repair workshops, and the like. They must have been like surprising and fresh little fireworks displays in the

exh. cat., Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Berlinische Galerie, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1993), 163: "The fates of Russian avant-garde art took a dramatic turn in the first third of the century. Many written documents were destroyed in the terrible circumstances of the time, and many artworks were lost forever. Only since the Paris exhibition Paris-Moskau is Ivan Puni once again mentioned in the relevant literature on Russian art. Even so, few of his works have remained in his homeland."



Fig. 116  
Small-format poster for the opening of the  
"Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 1915  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich







Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Novoie Iskusstvo, (New Art), (Variation 2)*, 1917–1918, 66.5 x 59.5 cm, oil on canvas  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Novoie Iskusstvo, (New Art), (Variation 1)*, 1917–1918, 79.5 x 59.5 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Novoie Iskusstvo, (New Art), (Variation 4)*, 1917–1918, 66.5 x 55.5 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Shas (Time)*, 1917–1918, 57 x 71.5 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Ace of Spades, (Variation 2)*, 1917–1918, 52 x 45 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Whist (Ace of Clubs)*, 1917–1918, 51.5 x 38 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

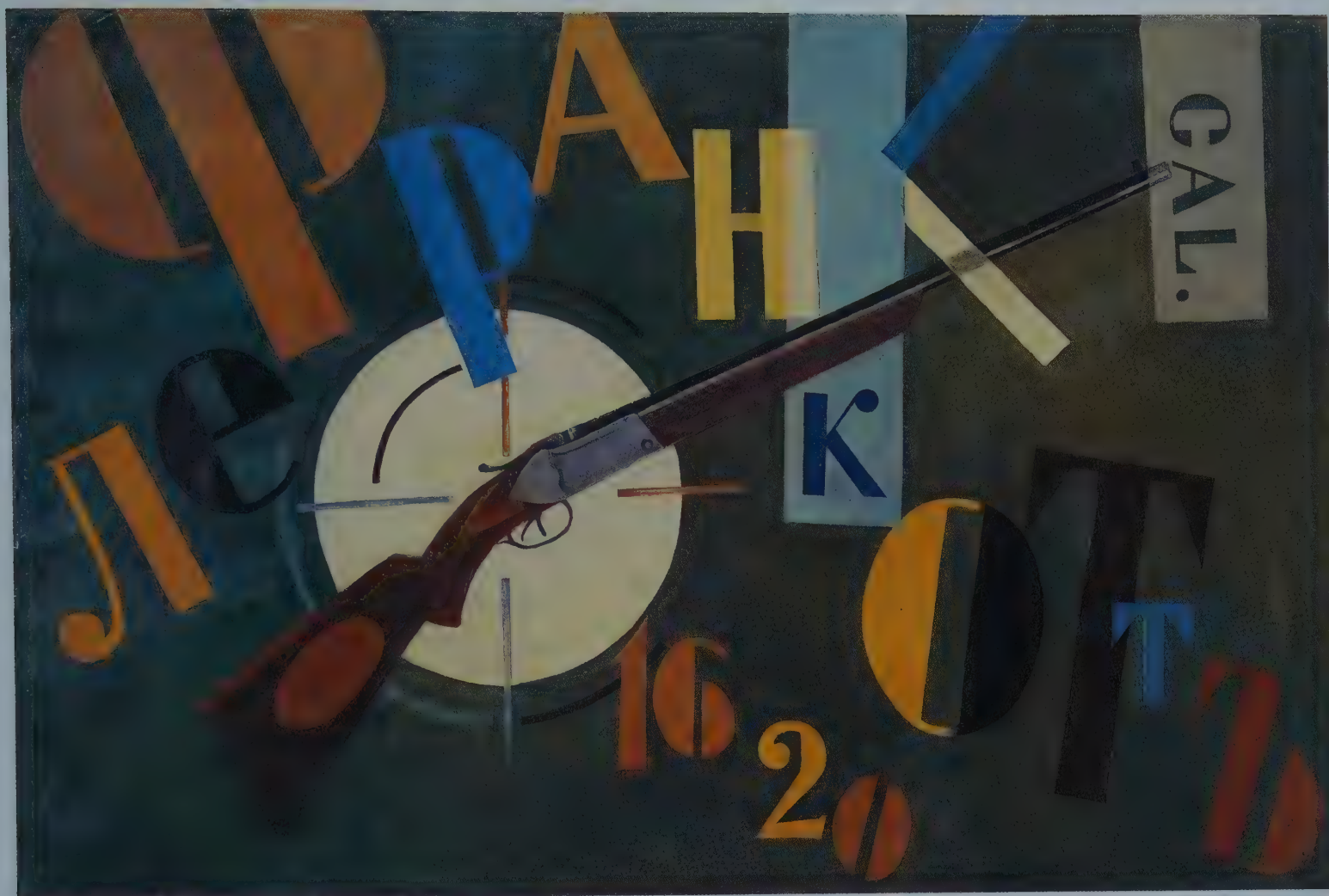


Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Checkmate*, 1917–1918, 70.3 x 49 cm, oil on wood  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Music*, Advertising sign for a music store in Petrograd, 1917–1918, 70 x 105 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Francotte*, 1917–1918, 58 x 88 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Papirosy*, 1917–1918, 96.5 x 66.5 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Tobacco*, 1917–1918, 88 x 64 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pendulum Clock*, 1917–1918, 84 x 52 cm, oil on wood  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Revolver 45 Cal.*, 1917–1918, 68.5 cm (diameter), oil on wood  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Homage to Carpentry, Still Life with Saw and Canvas Stretcher*, 1917–1918, 87.5 x 60.6 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich











# IVAN PUNI IN BERLIN

Hans Richter

**Ivan Puni**

Ivan Puni (in Paris later known as Pougny), one of the first abstract artists (and dadaists) of the art scene in Russia, and his wife also briefly took up residence on Tauentzienstrasse in Berlin. Xenia Puni was a pretty, lively, and extremely cheerful person, quite unlike her husband, Ivan, who had a pointed nose, black hair, black eyes, and a thin mouth that rarely smiled, so that he looked like a dangerous man who murdered for pleasure, or lack thereof.

And yet he was one of the gentlest and kindest people I have ever met. Since Eggeling could only take his eyes off Xenia in an emergency, and I liked both Punis very much, we were together a great deal in their studio in the years 1921–1922. The studio consisted of a single, moderately large room, about two meters of which were cut off in the corner by a curtain. One time I happened to lift this mysterious screen a little, and to my surprise I stood before a giant mountain of old loaves of white bread. "White bread has to be fresh," I was told. [...] And the mountain grew, even though food was growing scarcer every day. How the Punis ever rid themselves of this collection of white bread, I cannot say. Soon they left Berlin. Did the subsequent renter find some use for the aging white bread?

Hans Richter: *Naum Gabo*, in: *Russen in Berlin. Literatur, Malerei, Theater, Film 1918–1933*, ed. Fritz Mierau, (Leipzig 1987), 486–488.



Fig. 118  
Photograph of Xana Boguslavskaya  
from the journal *Die Dame*, 1922  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 119  
Ivan Puni, Berlin, 1923  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Page 147  
Berlin, Potsdamer Platz  
South side with Hotel Fürstenhof, Haus Vaterland, and Potsdamer Bahnhof,  
about 1925



Nina Berberova

### The Italics Are Mine

Sometimes [Viktor Shklovski's] ideas did not turn out so well. There was the time when he invited me to come to dinner at the home of the artist Ivan Puni and his wife, the artist Xenia Boguslavskaya. They had decided to dine à la Soviet, to make a little experiment and see what might come of it. Herring was served for the first course (vobla<sup>1</sup> just could not be found in Berlin). It had been beaten up well enough, but it was still as tough as a piece of wood. The second course consisted of buckwheat porridge into which they had poured some vegetable oil ("A little compromise," explained Shklovski).<sup>2</sup> We chewed away at the herring but then, looking lugubriously at the pot of porridge, felt that we just could not eat it. So we were forced to go to the tavern on the corner, where we ordered sausages, sauerkraut, and beer. "Just didn't turn out right," Viktor Shklovski said later. "We had lost the habit. Humans are such scoundrels."

Nina Berberova<sup>3</sup>, *Kursiv moi: Avtobiografiia* [*The italics are mine: Autobiography*] (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1972), 231.



Fig. 120  
Xana Boguslavskaya and Ivan Puni, Berlin, 1921; on the left on the wall above them is Puni's *Still Life: Relief with Hammer* of 1914–1921 (p. 57) and the drawing *Balcony* of 1914–1915, which served as the basis for the 1958 lithograph (fig. 43) Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

- 1 The word "vobla" (literally Caspian roach) refers to a small dried fish that is often eaten with beer.
- 2 Shklovski speaks of a "compromise" because Russians prefer butter or smetana (a kind of sour cream), rather than vegetable oil, on their porridge.
- 3 The writer Nina Nikolaevna Berberova (1901–1993) lived in Berlin and then Paris from the 1920s onwards. Here she describes a meeting with Ivan Puni in 1923, presumably in Berlin.

Viktor Shklovski

**About Ivan Puni and his wife,  
Xana Boguslavskaya**

About how a painter loves and how one ought to love  
a painter, about Puni's friends and about how  
books and paintings are born. The content of  
the letter is didactic (1923)

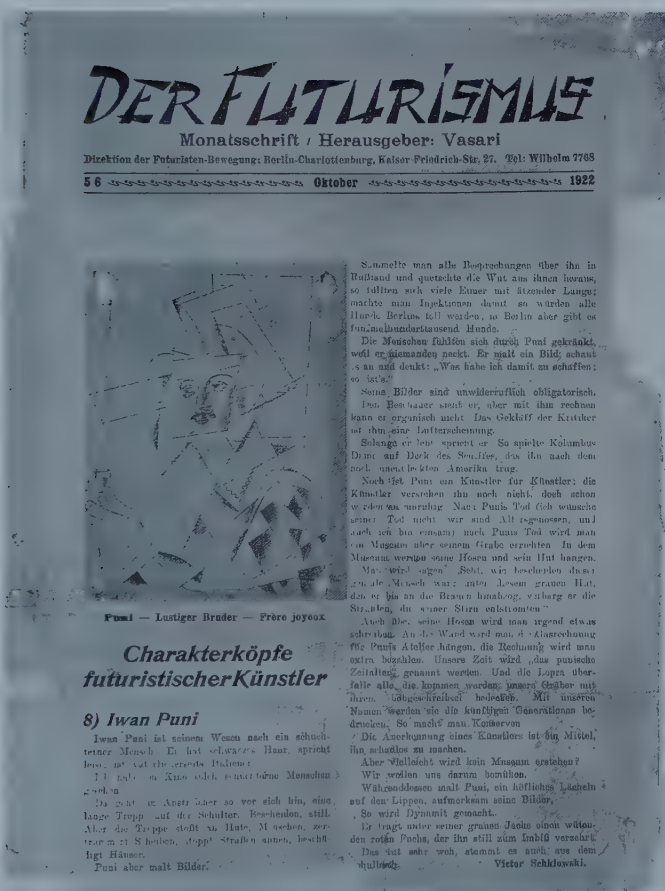


Fig. 121  
The journal *Der Futurismus*, nos. 5-6  
(October 1922), edited by Vasari, with  
the article *Charakterköpfe futuristischer  
Künstler: Ivan Puni* by Viktor Shklovski  
and an illustration of Ivan Puni's *Lusti-  
ger Bruder* (Merry fellow), 1919  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Puni is by nature a shy person. He has black hair,  
speaks quietly, and is Italian on his father's side.

I have seen shy people like this in the movie theater.  
There goes a housepainter walking along, with a long  
ladder on his shoulders. Modest, quiet. But the ladder  
bumps into hats and people, breaks windowpanes,  
stops streetcars, and damages houses.

But Puni paints paintings.

If you were to collect all the reviews in Russia about  
him and squeeze the rage out of them, it would fill  
many buckets with caustic lye; if you were to make  
injections from it, it would make all the dogs in Berlin  
rabid, and Berlin has five hundred thousand dogs.

People are offended by Puni because he doesn't play  
games with anyone. He paints a painting, looks at it,  
and thinks, "What does that have to do with me? It is  
what it is." His paintings are irrevocable, obligatory.

He sees the beholder, but by nature he is incapable of  
taking him into account. The yapping of the critics  
means no more to him than the weather. As long as he  
lives, he speaks. Similarly, Columbus played checkers  
onboard the ship that carried him to an undiscovered  
America.

Puni is still an artists' artist. Artists don't yet understand  
him, but they are already getting uncomfortable. When  
Puni is dead (I don't wish him dead: we are contem-  
poraries, and I am lonely too) – when Puni is dead they  
will build a museum on his grave. His pants and hat will  
hang in the museum. They will say, "Look how modest  
this man of genius was; beneath this gray hat, which  
he wore pulled down to his eyebrows, he hid the rays  
that poured out of his forehead."

They will write something about his pants as well. They  
will hang the gas bill for Puni's studio on the wall, and  
even pay the bill. Our epoch will be called the Age of  
Puni. And may leprosy strike all those who come to  
cover our graves with their scribbled eulogies. They will  
use our names to oppress future generations. That is  
how canned goods are made.

Recognizing an artist is a way to render him harmless.  
But perhaps there will be no museum? We will do what



we can to make it so. Meanwhile Puni, with a polite smile on his lips, paints his paintings attentively. That is how dynamite is made. Under his gray jacket he carries an enraged red fox that is quietly eating him as a snack. That hurts a lot, even if it does come right out of the textbook.

*Der Futurismus* (Berlin), nos. 5-6 (October 1922): 6.

### About Ivan Puni and his wife, 1923

How hard it is – even in letters, even through the black paper mask I make you wear, even in dreams – how hard it is for me to see your face.

Woman with no vocation, how do you spend your time? Is it really nice, Alia, to take bread from people and give it to dogs?

There are two kinds of dogs: those who beg and those who don't.

For me, Berlin is encircled by your name.

No news of the world gets through.

And Xana Boguslavskaya-Puni is down with diphtheria.

Poor girl, poor painter, poor painter's wife! I looked attentively at her and her husband until I met you.

I have known Vania Puni for ten years now – since "Tramway V". That's the name of an exhibition.

He takes no notice whatsoever of his surroundings, though he is not in love; he apparently loves no one, and can get along without people; he receives them absent-mindedly.

He has one sad love – his paintings. Just as I have failed to love you joyfully, so Puni, all his life, has loved art joylessly.

You will never be fair to me, because you have no vocation and no love, and if you have any sense of morality, it will not protect someone as strong as you.

Why should you be fair when you can tell me anytime, "I didn't ask you to love me," and then put me aside?

Don't be surprised that I cry out even when you're not hurting me.

It was you who taught me the principle of relativity. Imagine Gulliver among the giants: a female giant is holding him in her hand – just barely, almost not holding him at all; she has simply forgotten to let him go, but will release him at any moment; poor Gulliver cries out in terror and picks up the telephone to say – don't drop me! Ivan Puni is in love with his paintings; he watches the fate of art sadly, because for him nothing is simple and he cannot be certain of gaining the approbation of tomorrow.

One night I went to see him with Roman Jakobson, Carl Einstein, Bogatyryov and someone else. It was one or two A.M.; I don't remember which. Puni was still working in his studio. On the floor, on the chairs, on the bed lay tubes of paint.

He received us without joy and without consternation, as if we were passengers and his room a railroad car. We talked to each other about many things, all of them bitter. We ate potatoes as they came off the coals. Puni gave us some bacon and cooked the potatoes, but took no notice of us. He was looking sadly and attentively at a painting. And once I saw him laughing hard at one of his paintings: a design can amuse him as much as a witticism.

Xana Boguslavskaya is the painter's wife and a painter in her own right. Not a bad painter, either, though somewhat saccharine. In fact, probably a good painter, because the saccharine quality is intentional – a device. It has nothing to do with tears.

The most wonderful thing about her is that she is enamored of her husband's paintings. She jealously defends one variant against another and gets excited about what will come next.

But a painter needs bread; to get it, he must do pot-boilers. His shoulders physically ache from doing them. Real paintings don't sell – or, in any case, a painter has to wait a long, long time before he's recognized. We often jokingly refer to the Puni household as "The Holy Family," and sometimes "Private limited compagny" But the family, by the way, really is holy: if you translate the language of Berlin into some ancient tongue, you



get the flight into Egypt, with Xana as Joseph, Puni as the mother and a painting as the infant. Life is hard for every man who loves a woman or his trade.

Puni is visited by friends: Frigg, a blond German with a beautiful wife; a Latvian named Karl Zalitt, as boisterous as a fourth-century African Christian; Arnold Dserkahl, who looks like a Swede – huge, reticent, well dressed, strong and incomprehensible to me. Another frequent visitor is Rudi Belling, a Frenchified German, a sculptor built like a grasshopper: the expressionistic mannequins in the various shop windows of Berlin were made from his models.

All these people are calm and quiet when they look at the paintings. But Xana gazes at the canvases with eyes full of love. I don't think Puni noticed the revolution and war – he was working hard the whole time.

Paintings devour him. It is so hard to work!

These things are born like children. Conceived in joy – joy, not shame – then carried with difficulty and delivered in pain, to live forever after in bitterness.

Viktor Shklovski: *Zoo; or Letters Not about Love*, trans. and ed. Richard Sheldon, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1971), 55–58.


Fig. 122  
Clipping from journal with a reproduction of the lubok  
*Late at Night in the Forest* by Xana Boguslavskaya, 1922  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 123  
Clipping from *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* with an article  
on the "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung" and repro-  
ductions of Ivan Puni's *Synthetic Musician* as well as  
works by Vladimir Tatlin and Rudolf Belling, 1922  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Fig. 124  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Snow (Vitebsk)*, 1919, Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Heinz Stahlhut

**"An Ultimate in Pictorial Possibility"**  
Ivan Puni's "Eight Linocuts" of 1922

In 1922 the Berlin publishing house Ernst Wasmuth published a portfolio with eight linocuts by the Russian artist Ivan Puni and a text by Paul Westheim. With a small print run of only twenty-five copies, it numbers among the absolute rarities in Puni's small oeuvre of graphic works.<sup>1</sup>

**An Epochal Exhibition**

In February 1921 Puni, who had been living in the German capital since September 1920, began to receive attention with a solo exhibition at Herwarth Walden's Galerie Der Sturm. It was not just the parade of sandwich people in Cubist costumes that Puni had designed, who tried to arouse the interest of passersby in the street with the enigmatic texts "usstellung," "wa," and "rm,"<sup>2</sup> but the spectacular design of the show itself. Three-quarters of the gallery's wall surface was covered with burlap, and monumental letters and numbers cut from colored paper had been applied to it, along with the figure of a flying or falling acrobat as a kind of dramatic final chord (figs. 44 and 45).<sup>3</sup>

On these walls, which had themselves been turned into artworks, numerous drawings from Puni's Vitebsk period were presented. Although they were wholly

<sup>1</sup> The catalogue raisonné lists a total of seventeen woodcuts and linocuts, including these eight. Since then another sheet has been published, the woodcut *Composition* (with the Letters J R JA) of 1922. On this, see Rainer Michael Mason, "Moderne, postmoderne: Deux cas d'école: L'avant-garde russe et hongroise, 1916–1925"; *Giorgio de Chirico, 1924–1934*, exh. cat., Cabinet des estampes, Musée d'art et d'histoire Genève (Geneva: Editions du Tricorne, 1988), 89, 230.

<sup>2</sup> John Bowlit has clarified these cryptic sequences of letters on one of the costumes by filling them in as follows: "[A]usstellung" (exhibition), "[I]wa[n]" (Ivan, in the German transliteration), and "[Stu]rm" (the name of the gallery). See Bowlit, "Flucht der Formen: Iwan Puni und die funktionale Ästhetik", in Jean-Louis Andral, Jean-Claude Marcadé, and Marie-Anne Chambost, eds., *Iwan Puni, 1892–1956*, exh. cat., Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris and Berlinische Galerie, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1993), 43.

<sup>3</sup> The ambivalent significance of this figure, somewhere between a triumphant overcoming of gravity and a deadly fall, has already been remarked on, including a reference to the gouache *Catastrophe* (B/C 257); see Eberhard Roters, "Iwan Puni: Der Synthetische Musiker," in: Eberhard Roters, and Hubertus Gassner, *Iwan Puni. Synthetischer Musiker*, ed. Helmut Geisert, Elizabeth Moortgat, and Martina Jura (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1992), 14–70, esp. 27.



figurative, nonetheless, with their large monochrome planes in shades of black, white, and gray that lacked interior drawing; their extreme perspectives; their overlapping close-ups; and their virtuosic incorporation of letters and numbers, they spanned the gulf between figurative representation of external reality and autonomous, abstract pictorial organization.<sup>4</sup> For example, it is only upon sustained examination that a sheet like *The Snow* of 1919 (fig. 124) can be read as figurative representation, since the bird's eye view of the snow-covered roofs and the omnipresent (snow) white (of the sheet) blur the spatial relationships almost entirely. This causes the black fields to resemble the rhomboid and barlike elements of the suprematist works that Puni had executed in Petrograd two years earlier, such as *Composition* of 1917 (p. 167).<sup>5</sup> Landscapes and depictions of the stormy events of the October Revolution, with dramatic diagonals and stark contrasts of black and white, stood alongside a large number of tranquil, intimate interiors that caused one contemporary critic to draw a comparison – which he considered damning – between Puni's drawings and those of Félix Vallotton (1865–1925).<sup>6</sup>

The dominance of black in these drawings had its justification as a motif in the artificial light of a candle or reading lamp. The resulting compression of forms and the collapsing of space bring these compositions closer to abstraction as well. At the same time, however, the connection to the objective motif continued to be decisive: the process undergone by the viewer, who at first sees primarily “pure” forms and then gradually identifies figurative elements, accounts for the attrac-



Fig. 125

Procession of the “sandwich people” in cubist costumes designed by Puni as advertisements for his exhibition at Herwarth Walden’s Galerie Der Sturm, February 1921  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 126

“The painter Xenia Boguslavskaya in a futurist costume designed by the painter Puni,” clipping from the journal *Die Dame*, circa 1921  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

<sup>4</sup> Similar observations have been made by Jean-Claude Marcadé and Jörn Merkert in *Iwan Puni, 1892–1956* (see note 2), 21f., 33.

<sup>5</sup> In this context one should also mention B/C 141, 142, 144, 145, and 145 bis.

<sup>6</sup> The author of a critique of the Sturm exhibition in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* for 22 February 1921 spoke of a “long outdated Vallotton style, both figurative and nonfigurative, just as the currently pursued ism prescribes,” which only hits the mark in a very limited sense in terms of both style and mood, as Puni’s drawings have neither the rounded flow of line found in the Swiss artist’s drawings nor the coldness and enigmatic sarcasm of Vallotton’s “Intimités” of 1898.



Fig. 127  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Caricature of the gallery owner  
Herwarth Walden (1878–1941), 1921*  
Iwan Puni-Archiv Zürich

tion and artistic importance of the small-format graphic works. This (temporary) “alienation” of the everyday corresponds to the emancipation of the letters in the transrational poetry of the futurist poets. In literature and theater Velimir Khlebnikov and other writers – all close friends of Puni – had already exploited this irrationality in a struggle, very much politically motivated, against subjecting all creativity to the relentless rationality of purely utilitarian thought.<sup>7</sup> “If we think of the soul as split between the government of the intellect and a stormy population of feelings, then ... beyond-sense language ... [is an appeal] over the head of the government straight to the population of feelings, a direct cry to the predawn of the soul or a supreme example of the rule of the masses in the life of language and intellect.”<sup>8</sup>

In Puni’s exhibition at the Galerie Der Sturm each of his drawings was framed between two glass plates bound together with black tape; often several were hung one above the other on simple strings. Thus they could quietly swing back and forth and thereby embody the calm floating that was typical of the compositional elements in the abstract paintings and drawings of suprematism. That stylistic movement, developed by Kazimir Malevich, was exemplified in turn by the numerous abstract collages that Puni had pinned to the wall with thumbtacks. The differences in the way the works were hung is enough to make clear the extent to which Puni sought to juggle with the two types of pictorial form – the figurative and the abstract – in a virtuosic and ironic way and thus be a moving target within the embittered debates between the advocates of the respective sides.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, the abstract collages were

<sup>7</sup> On this, see Bowlit, *Flucht der Formen* (note 2), 41–45, and his essay in the present volume, pp. 36–52.

<sup>8</sup> Velimir Khlebnikov, *On Poetry*, in Velimir Khlebnikov, *The King of Time. Selected Writings of the Russian Futurian*, ed. Charlotte Douglas, trans. Paul Schmidt (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), 152.

<sup>9</sup> Hubertus Gassner, *Der Text im Kontext*, in Puni, Roters, and Gassner, *Iwan Puni* (note 4), 84ff., has demonstrated, in an analysis of Puni’s writings and lectures, that Puni was inclined to defend artistic individuality against all forms of collectivism.



applied directly to the wall and thus entered into a close, almost decorative connection with it; on the other, the autonomous figurative images, though still framed in the traditional manner, were set in motion. By the time of this exhibition, if not earlier, the publisher Günther Wasmuth must have become aware of the Russian artist. Their acquaintance would develop into a long friendship among the publisher, the artist, and their wives; Wasmuth Verlag would pay a lasting tribute to that friendship by publishing a two-volume catalogue raisonné of Puni's works.

Although it can no longer be determined with certainty how the contact came about, the idea for the portfolio of linocuts was clearly proposed by Wasmuth Verlag.<sup>10</sup> The house, which had been founded in 1872 together with an architectural bookstore, had grown between 1890 and 1910 into the leading publisher of books on architecture and art, including influential works by Hermann Muthesius, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Karl Blossfeldt.<sup>11</sup>

The eight sheets are held in a vertical-format portfolio with a jacket – made of delicate crushed paper with a brown jagged pattern against a gold – colored ground – that is clearly meant to imitate exotic leather of a sort often used in art deco, the reigning style at the time. When the portfolio is opened, it reveals a folded insert of 33 x 24 cm, the verso of which identifies the author and title of the artwork – “IWAN PUNI (IVAN POUJNI) ACHT LINOLEUMSCHNITTE” (Ivan Puni, Eight lino-

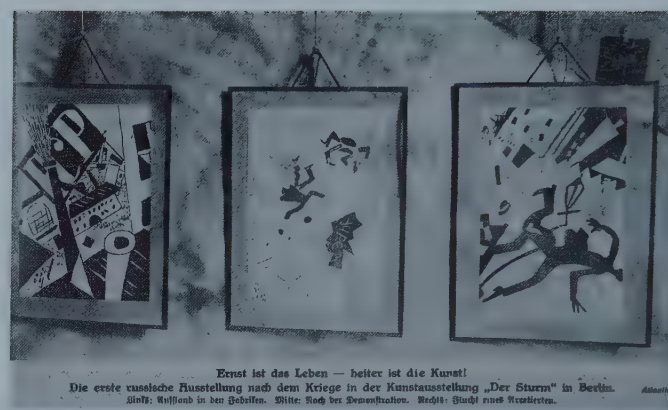


Fig. 128

Clipping from a German newspaper with a photograph of the installation of Puni's drawings in the Galerie Der Sturm; on the left is *Composition: Uprising in the Factories* of 1920 (p. 173) Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

<sup>10</sup> According to information from Ernst J. Wasmuth provided in January 2003, the wartime destruction of the publishing house at Markgrafenstrasse 31 in Berlin in 1943 led to the loss of large parts of their archive, including, presumably, any documents pertaining to Puni's portfolio that might still have existed at the time. Herman Berninger confirms, however, that Wasmuth had proposed the project to Puni.

<sup>11</sup> For the history of the publishing house, see *Einhundert Jahre Wasmuth-Bücher* (Tübingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> On Westheim, see Peter H. Feist, *Paul Westheim*, in *Metzler Kunsthistoriker Lexikon*, ed. Peter Betthausen et al. (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1999), 464 f.; on Westheim's journal *Die Schaffenden*, see Daniel Kletke's recent article, *Das Rifkind Center im County Museum in Los Angeles erinnert an Paul Westheim*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 80 (7 April 1999): 49.



Fig. 129  
Installation of Puni's abstract drawings  
and collages in the Galerie Der Sturm; at  
bottom right is the preliminary  
drawing for the *Suprematist Relief* of  
1915 (p. 166).  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

cuts) – and Paul Westheim as the author of the introductory text that follows.

Westheim<sup>12</sup> was born in 1886 and died in 1963; after dropping out of business school and attending Heinrich Wölfflin's public lectures in Frankfurt am Main, Westheim first turned to commercial art and was active for various newspapers. In January 1917 he founded the progressive art journal *Kunstblatt* together with Henry Van de Velde and Gustav Kiepenheuer. From 1918 to 1932 he edited a series of portfolios of original prints for Kiepenheuer and other publishers, under the title *Die Schaffenden* (The creators). The journal *Die Schaffenden*, which was published quarterly, also served as an edition of graphic works that enabled Westheim to provide a hungry market with affordable contemporary art. It was modeled on the portfolios published by the artists' group "Die Brücke" (The bridge) and combined a high standard of artistic quality with low print runs that rarely exceeded 125 copies.

In 1920 Westheim launched the series "Orbis Pictus Weltkunstbücherei" (Orbis Pictus books of world art) for Wasmuth's publishing house with a volume on Indian architecture; he would edit the series until 1925. Westheim was also suited to be the author of the introduction to Puni's linocuts in that he had edited *Holzschnittbuch* (Woodcut book) the previous year.<sup>13</sup> In the journal *Das Kunstblatt* Westheim had already advocated the modern art of his day, especially expressionism and Neue Sachlichkeit (New objectivity); *Holzschnittbuch*, too, emerged in the context of a newly awakened desire on the part of expressionist and other artists to return to older approaches to design that they saw embodied in the woodcut.

In his text Westheim alluded to a much repeated criticism of Puni's work, namely, that it fused the various isms into a synthesis. Westheim was not particularly interested in this; however, because in his view that

<sup>13</sup> Despite clear differences, the linocut is usually treated as a subsidiary form of the woodcut, because both are relief prints. See, for example, Felix Brunner, *Handbuch der Druckgraphik* (Teufen: A. Niggli, 1968), 50.



sort of "emphasis on mere innovation [was] a matter for hairdressers", he had avoided Puni, until a visit to Puni's studio changed his mind.

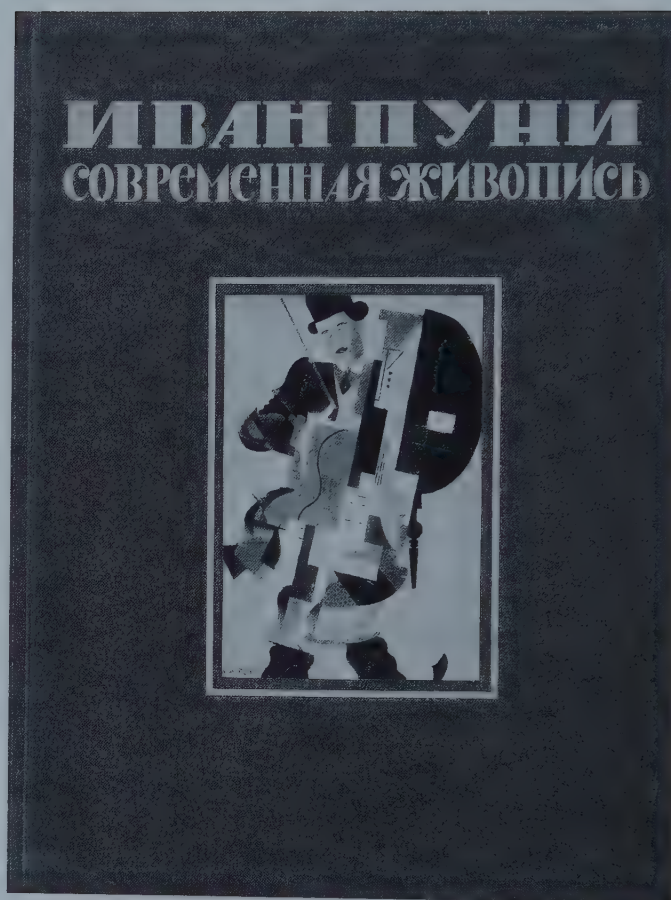
As Westheim characterizes them, Puni's works are not depictions of an external reality but rather its pendants, equal to it in rank and with their own autonomous value. This "concreteness" that Westheim identifies seems to find an echo in the portfolio's title, which, in an emphatically purist style, states nothing more than what is actually there: eight linocuts by Ivan Puni. There is no more general title to evoke a mood or propose a particular reading.

The last page of the insert gives the titles of the 34 x 51 cm sheets in the series: 1. *City*; 2. *City*; 3. *Staircase*; 4. *Streetlamp*; 5. *Pool Player*; 6. *Staircase*; 7. *Window*; and 8. *Houses*. In most cases the images go back to drawings from Puni's period in Petrograd and Vitebsk. For example, the first of the two sheets titled *City* is based on the drawing *Houses at Night* of 1916–1917; *Streetlamp* is based on a drawing from 1917 entitled *The Night*, (a study for Berninger/Cartier 210); and *Houses* is based on *Small Café* of 1916, another ink drawing on paper.

### Exclusivity and Simplicity

In these works the rich black passages are executed in linocut, whereas the other colors were added subsequently in gouache. The resulting sheets are, strictly speaking, monotypes; like the small print run, this would have made the work more exclusive. The small print run and the turn to the intimate, personal genre of the print might be seen as a declaration against collective art, the rejection of which had, after all, been one reason for Puni's emigration from Soviet Russia.<sup>14</sup>

In considering the question of Puni's choice of linocuts for the sheets in this portfolio, several criteria can be



<sup>14</sup> In Puni's *Der deutsche Expressionismus und die Malerei in der russischen Kunst* of 1922, he remarks on this subject, "without individualism, there is no art, just mechanical production, whether it is automobiles or black dots on white paper"; reprinted in Andral et al., *Ivan Puni*, 1892–1956 (see note 2), 83.

Fig. 130  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Modern Painting* (in Russian),  
Berlin Frenkel, 1923  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

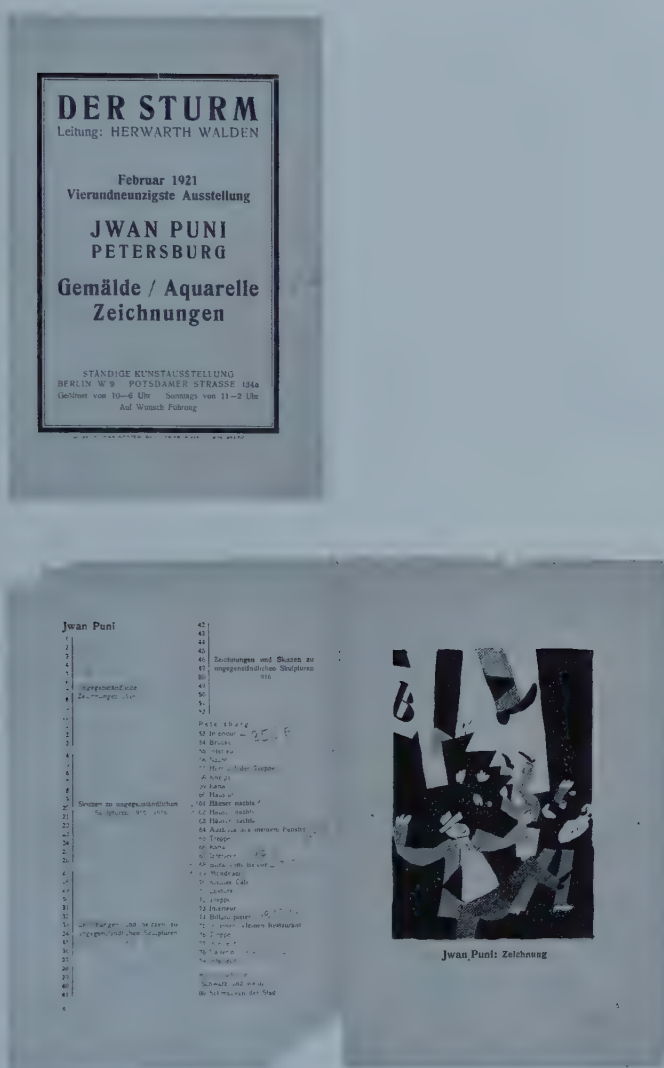


Fig. 131  
Catalog of the exhibition Iwan Puni,  
Galerie Der Sturm, Berlin, February  
1921, with title page and list of works  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

identified. The linocut, which was developed relatively late among graphic techniques,<sup>15</sup> is easier to produce than a woodcut. This is why it is so popular among amateurs and in the field of commercial art, but it is also why – despite its great range of expressive possibilities – it is not as highly valued by serious artists. In comparison to the woodcut that was favored by the expressionists, the printing block of a linocut is just as durable for printing but has a smoother, tighter surface. It can also be strikingly different in the actual results of printing when compared to a woodcut. Whereas the printing produced by a hard wooden block is usually rich and covers well, the flexible linoleum block makes it possible to achieve gradations of tone. By manipulating the block it is even possible to change the character from that of a graphic work to that of a painted one; in the case of the present sheets, this effect is further enhanced by the gouache applied by brush subsequent to printing. And in any event the focus is not on the reproducibility of the medium as such, since the print runs are usually small, as was the case with the present portfolio.

Puni must have seen the advantages of all these characteristics of the linocut. The woodcut, with its bursting contours and speckled background structure, was the most appropriate medium for his works in the “primitivist” style, such as the illustration *Susanna and the Elders* from the journal *Roaring Parnassus* of 1914 (fig. 46). It did not, however, prove to be well suited to other compositions. The surface of the black fields is too irregular, and the contours of the more delicate lines are too broken; the imprints of caught burrs frequently disturb the white surfaces around the concentrations of forms in the center.

<sup>15</sup> On the linocut, see Annie Bardon, *Linolschnitt überhaupt*, and Gunther Thieme, *Kleine Geschichte des Linolschnitts*, in *Linolschnitt heute* (Bietigheim-Bissingen: Städtische Galerie Bietigheim-Bissingen, 1989), 7, 9–12. According to Thieme, the linocut, which was made possible only with the invention of linoleum as a floor covering by the Scot Frederick Walton in London sometime before 1863, was probably not used in art prior to 1900.



By contrast, the present portfolio, dating from the same year, makes clear how eminently suited the linocut is to intensifying the effect of Puni's drawings from Petrograd and Vitebsk. In comparison to the ink drawings, which for all their simplification are still rich in detail, the prints are impressive for the extreme reduction of the content of the images to highly dense fields of a deep black that shimmers almost like oil, and for the mutually intensifying manner in which these fields interact with the white of the sheet and truly cause it to glow. This is particularly clear with windows: in the masterly sheet that takes its name from them (p. 187) or in the two prints with the title *City* (p. 186), the windows are "carved", in the most literal sense of the word, into the darkness of the surfaces of the walls. It is also clear in the artificial light sources in both prints titled *Staircase* or in *Streetlamp*. This background also helps to explain the deliberately narrow spectrum of color, all shades of gray, which in *Pool Player* (p. 187) is brightened only by the light green of the pool table, while in *Houses* (p. 187) the series closes with a "rush of color", with two different grays, gray-blue, and olive. And just as bright responds to dark, so does form answer form. Although it may be possible to interpret every formal element as figurative, in the composition it has the equally important function of serving as a counterpart to another form. And whereas the details of such drawings as *Houses at Night* always conceal atmospheric effects, like the black clouds drifting through the bright night sky, every element in the prints is no more and no less than a motif *and* a pure form at the same time. As Westheim put it, "Puni's designs are as concrete, as material, as physical as reality itself." This reduction of the content of narrative and mood is also evident in the fact that, unlike many of the drawings, the linocuts – with the exception of *The Pool Player* – do not depict any human figures whose disposition or actions could influence the character of the architectonic representations. This becomes particularly clear when the linocuts are compared to drawings like *Revolution 1917* (p. 172) or *Composition: Uprising*

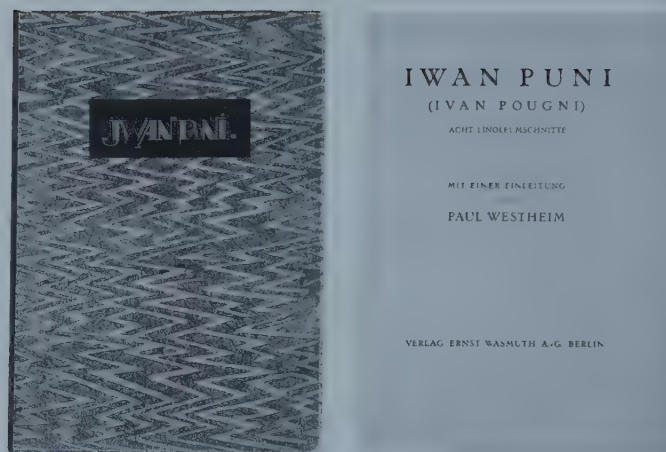


Fig. 132 und 133  
 Insert for "Iwan Puni (Ivan Pouni)  
 Acht Linoleumschnitte" (Eight linocuts),  
 copy no. 8 of 25, 1922  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 134  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Invitation to the Expressionists' Ball or  
Sturm Ball at the Berlin Zoo on 8 March  
1921, with the drawing *Fox Trot* by  
Ivan Puni, 1921  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

in the *Factories* of 1920 (p. 173), in which the almost burlesque behavior of the antlike figures lend the depictions a character that is not well suited to the glorification of revolutionary events.<sup>16</sup>

Architectonic forms like those in the second of the sheets titled *Staircase*, which are made dynamic by shattered forms and numerous diagonal lines, coincide with Puni's ideas of pictorial architecture, as expressed in the artistic credo he published three years later. Westheim's conversion experience when confronted with Puni's work can be understood from this series alone. So it is no surprise that he included a text by Puni when he published his anthology *Künstlerbekenntnisse* (Artistic credos, 1923), where Puni finds himself in excellent company: among Paul Cézanne and Vincent van Gogh; Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque; Wassili Kandinski and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner; Fernand Léger, Amédée Ozenfant, and Le Corbusier; and even Charlie Chaplin, whom he admired so much.

<sup>16</sup> This burlesque character does indeed push some of Puni's renderings—including several of his designs for decorations for the celebration of the first anniversary of the Russian Revolution—in the direction of Vallotton's woodcuts like *La manifestation* of 1873. The sort of skepticism and ironic distance with respect to mass movements that is expressed in the works by Puni mentioned here must have attracted the suspicion of the guardians of the dominant cultural politics, which was intent precisely on glorifying the revolution.



**The exhibition "Iwan Puni"  
at the Galerie Der Sturm, February 1921**



Entrance of the Galerie Der Sturm with the decoration by Iwan Puni, February 1921  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Reconstruction of a wall at Ivan Puni's exhibition at the Galerie Der Sturm, February 1921,  
with works from the Iwan Puni-Archiv Zurich  
Museum Jean Tinguely, Basel 2003





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Cubo-Sculpture*, 1915, 70 x 50 x 9 cm, wood, cardboard, oil, and gouache on plywood  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Suprematist Relief*, 1915, 70 x 50 x 9 cm, wood, tin, cardboard, oil, and gouache on plywood  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition*, 1917, 33 x 25 cm  
 India ink and graphite on paper, mounted on cardboard  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition, Sketch for "Pictorial Sculpture (Berninger/Cartier 102)"*,  
 1915, 48 x 26 cm  
 India ink, watercolor, graphite on paper, mounted on cardboard  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition Sketch for "Relief with Saw, (Berninger/Cartier 108)"*,  
 1915, 39 x 32 cm  
 India ink and graphite on paper, mounted on cardboard  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition for a Pictorial Sculpture*, 1915, 48 x 34.5 cm  
 India ink and graphite on paper, mounted on cardboard  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



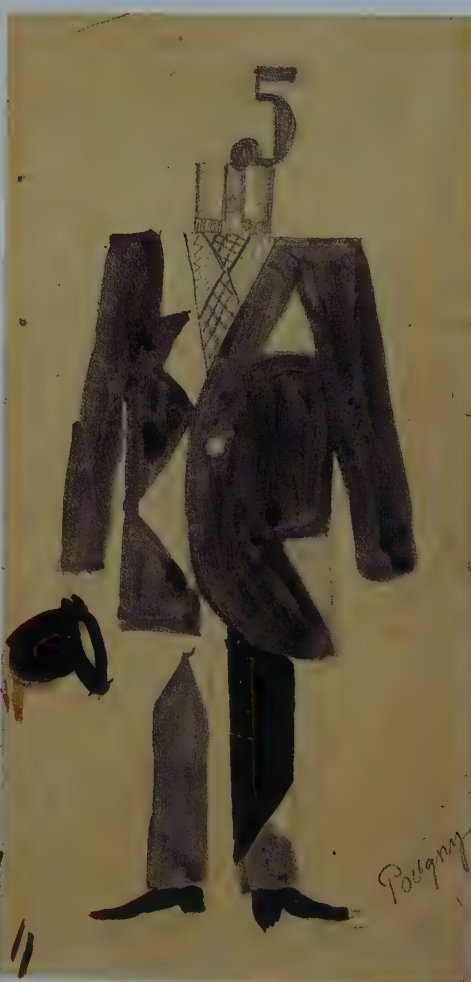


Reconstruction of a wall at Ivan Puni's exhibition at the Galerie Der Sturm, February 1921  
Museum Jean Tinguely, Basel 2003



Reconstruction of a wall at Ivan Puni's exhibition at the Galerie Der Sturm, February 1921  
with works from the Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Museum Jean Tinguely, Basel 2003



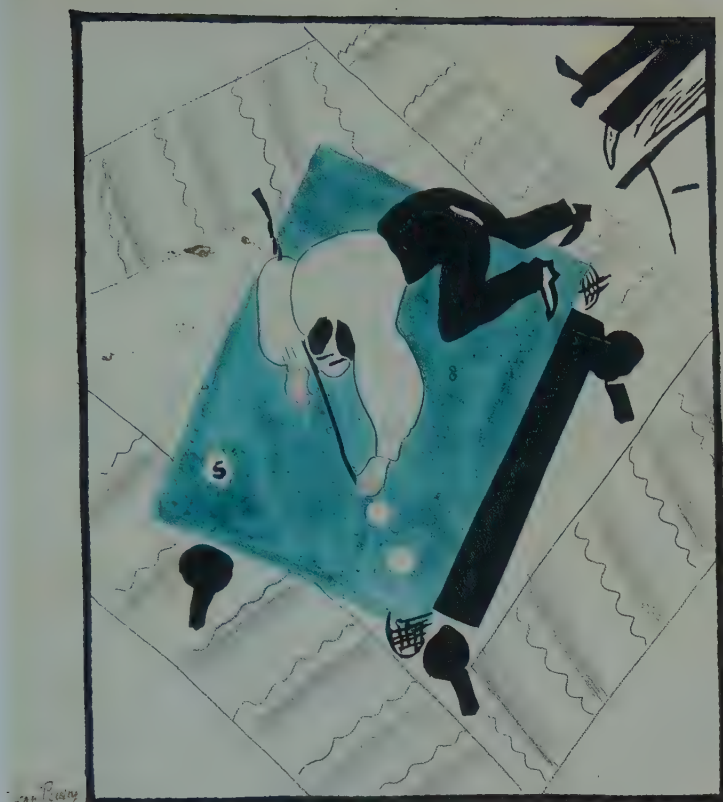


left above  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
"Bal lettriste" of Galerie Der Sturm  
*Female dancer*, 1921, 26 x 18.5 cm  
Watercolor, pencil, and gouache on paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

left below  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
"Bal lettriste" of Galerie Der Sturm  
*Red Dancer*, 1921, 24 x 16.5 cm  
India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

right above  
*Juggler*, 1920, 39 x 22 cm  
Pencil and gouache on paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

right below  
Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
"Bal lettriste" of Galerie Der Sturm  
*Headless man*, 1921, 27 x 14 cm  
India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



left above  
*Pool Player*, 1920, 40.5 x 35 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and watercolor on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



right above  
 Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
 "Bal lettriste" of Galerie Der Sturm, *The Cyrillic letter "T"*, 1921,  
 34.5 x 22 cm, India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



right below  
 Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
 "Bal lettriste" of Galerie "Der Sturm", *The Cyrillic letter "V"*, 1921,  
 36 x 22 cm, India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Seamstress*, 1916, 29 x 17 cm, india ink on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Shoemaker's Store in Vitebsk*, 1919, 30 x 21 cm, india ink and pencil on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Revolution*, 1917, 30.5 x 23 cm, india ink on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Night, the Sailors' Patrol*, 1917, 27.5 x 21 cm, india ink on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



left above  
 Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition: Uprising in the Factories*, 1920, 30.7 x 21.6 cm  
 India ink and pencil on paper  
 Collection Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands



right above  
 Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Wooden Fence*, 1919, 31 x 21.5 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and colored pencil on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



reight below  
 Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Old Music*, 1916, 31 x 24 cm,  
 India ink on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pool Player*, 1921, 76 x 64 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Russian Black Marketeer in Berlin*, 1921, 104 x 98 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Synthetischer Musiker* (*Synthetic Musician*), 1921, 145 x 98 cm, oil on canvas  
Berlinische Galerie – Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Blind Musician*, 1921, 89 x 57 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Study for Self-Portrait at the Mirror*, 1921, 28 x 21 cm, graphite and gouache on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Self-Portrait at the Mirror*, 1921, 81.4 x 56 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



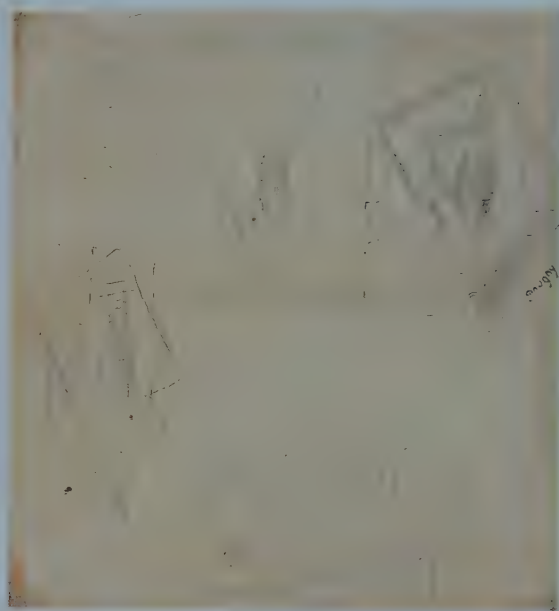


Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition (Constructivist Still Life)*, 1920–1921, 67 x 53.5 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Still Life with Saw and Palette*, 1923, 77 x 51 cm, oil on canvas  
Berlinische Galerie – Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur





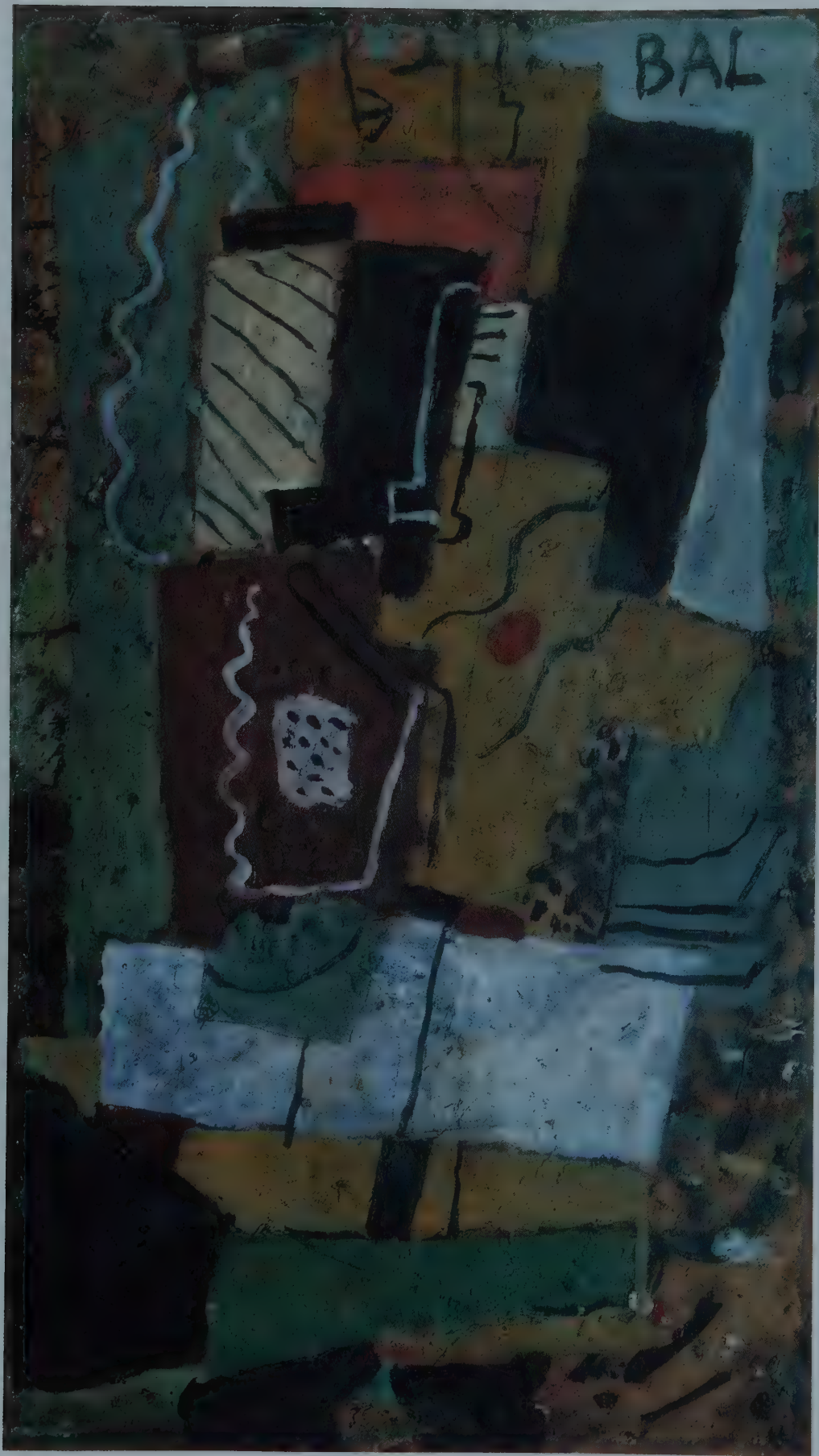
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Still Life: Glass and Bottle*, 1921–1922, 61 x 46.5 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Group of five drawings, of which three are preliminary drawings for the painting *Berninger/Cartier 88*, 1921–1922  
 29 x 32 cm, pencil on paper  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Still Life with White Bottle*, 1922, 68 x 42 cm, oil on canvas  
Berlinische Galerie – Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst, Fotografie und Architektur





Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Accordion Player*, 1921, 61 x 34 cm, oil on canvas, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle  
Donation de Xénia Pougny (Paris) en 1959

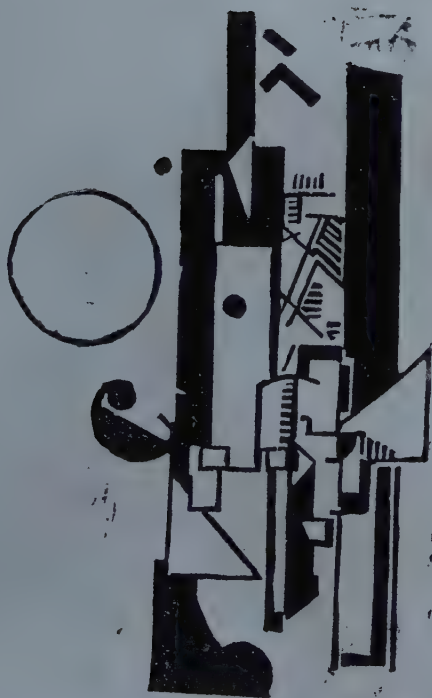


left above  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Manifesto for the ball at Herwarth Walden's Galerie  
Der Sturm, 1921, 21 x 14 cm  
Pencil and gouache on paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

right above  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Caricature of the gallery owner Herwarth Walden (1878–1941)  
1921, 28.5 x 22.5 cm, pencil on ruled paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

right below  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Caricature of Alexander Archipenko (1887–1964)  
1921, 22.5 x 25 cm, pencil on ruled paper  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





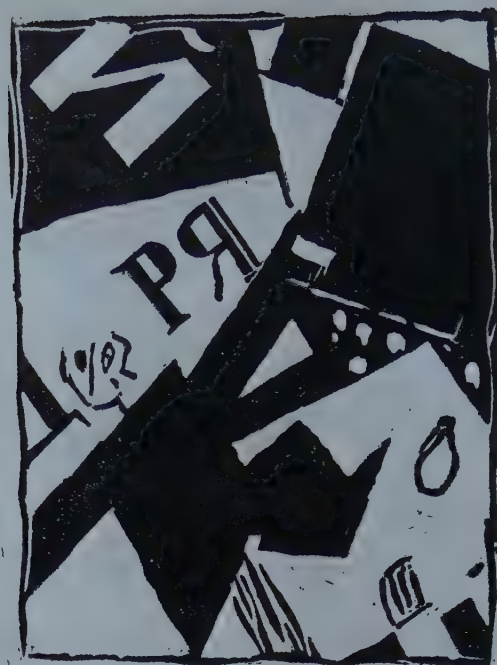
left above  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition*, 1922  
32.5 x 25.5 cm  
Linocut on paper  
Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva

left below  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition (with Displaced Circle)*, 1922  
32.4 x 25.6 cm  
Linocut on paper  
Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva

right  
Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition (with Comma)*, 1922  
32.5 x 25.7 cm  
Linocut on paper  
Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva

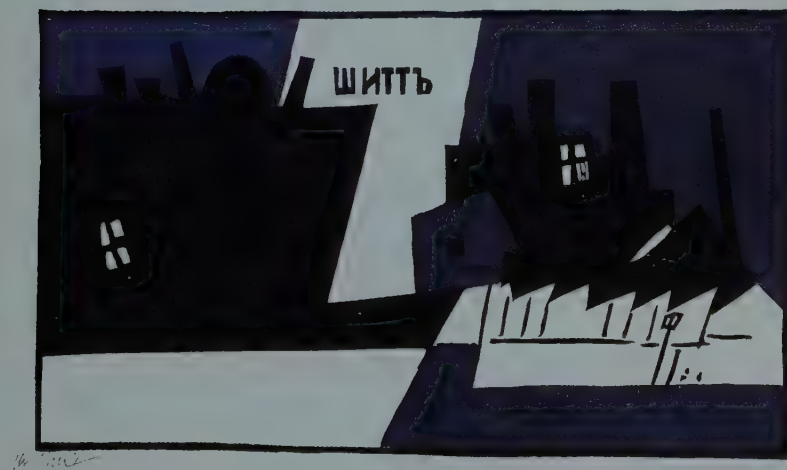


Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition*, 1922  
 32.4 x 25.3 cm, Linocut on paper  
 Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition (with the Letters J R JA)*, 1922  
 32.5 x 25.5 cm, linocut on paper  
 Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva





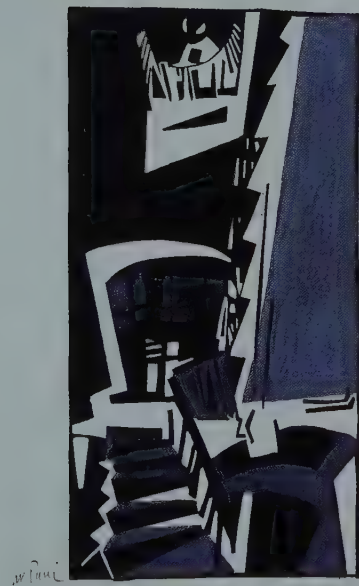
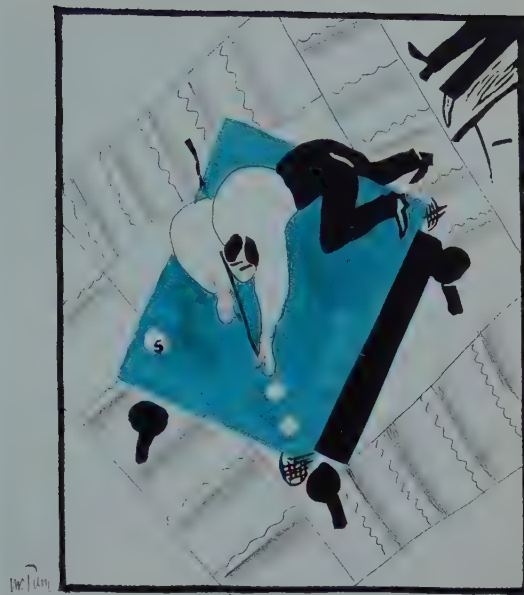
Ivan Albertovich Puni

"Acht Linoleumschnitte" (Eight linocuts), copy 8/25

1. City; 2. City; 3. Staircase; 4. Streetlamp; 5. Pool Player; 6. Staircase; 7. Windows; and 8. Houses – Small Café, 1922

28.5 x 21 cm, linocuts, heightened with gouache, on paper

Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich













# JEAN PUGNY IN PARIS

Annette Kaufman

## Mr. and Mrs. Pougny

My late husband, the celebrated violinist, Louis Kaufman (1905–1994), made his first visit to Paris in spring 1930 and found life there exhilarating and exciting in that burgeoning art world. He visited Zborovski's art gallery on the rue de Seine, where he encountered works of Modigliani, Soutine, Kremègne, and Hayden, and met the Russian artist John Graham (née Dombrovski, a former cavalry officer). They visited galleries together and had spirited discussions about American painters. Graham introduced Louis to the "Russian" painter Jean Pougny, whose Italian father had lived for many years in imperial Russia, where their name was spelled "Puni".

After he and his devoted wife, Xenia, arrived in Paris, Pougny discovered and fell in love with the paintings of Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard. He searched for old, worthless, and discarded paintings at the flea market that he bought for a few francs and used them as his canvases. This gave his paintings a richer patination.

His father, an amateur cellist, often played chamber music in Russia and bequeathed to Pougny a Stradivarius cello and violin. When Pougny and Xenia left revolutionary Russia, he sold the instruments to Hill's Violin Shop in London, an action that provided them with funds to survive the difficult years before they found collectors in Paris and a steady gallery. Pougny loved classical music and especially the violin. One day they invited Louis to a delicious Russian dinner at their small atelier on the rue Vercingétorix (which disappeared in the 1990s in the huge Cité Montparnasse complex). Pougny asked Louis to bring his violin and play for them after dinner. That evening Louis bought two of Pougny's views of Paris, one of the Porte Vincennes and the other a busy little street near his studio, plus a large abstract gouache, after which Louis played some movements of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas. Being tired, he wished to leave at midnight, but Pougny, enchanted by the music, impulsively offered, "If you'll play the Bach Chaconne, I'll give you any one of my gouaches or watercolors that you'd like." Louis played the fifteen-



minute Chaconne as well as he could and chose a watercolor dated 1919 – a semi-cubist body of a seated man (sans the top of his head) with a moustache, an elegant green vest, and a white bow tie holding what might be a cello. Could this have been a reference to his father?

Xenia added to their modest income by acting as an art dealer for many of their Russian friends. Louis later bought two Kostia Tereshkovich paintings and a fascinating André Lanskoï interior from her.

When Louis and I were on our honeymoon in 1933, we visited the Pougny's in Paris and invited them to a Russian café for lunch. Xenia delighted me by saying "Annette est la parfaite Madame Kaufman."

In the 1950s on our return to France after the war we again visited the Pougny's. Jean had become very frail and could no longer paint large works, but he did paint wonderful, small canvases of clowns, beach scenes, etc. He told us how dreadful and miserable their lives had been under the cruel Nazi occupation of France. When they returned to Paris after the "Liberation," they told us of the immense help a devoted Swiss collector had been – buying Pougny's works constantly. They also related how amused they were that a couple (whom they recognized as members of the Rothschild family) visited their studio and gave a false name in an attempt to purchase the works at lower fees!

In 1975 we loaned the Pougny gouache and watercolor to a Berlin exhibit at the suggestion of Mr. Herman Berninger of Zurich. At that time he had arranged for publication of a handsome book about Pougny's cubist and futurist works in Russia and Berlin in the 1910 – 20s, which we bought at Zwemmer's bookstore in London. In 1991 while visiting Zurich we visited Mr. Berninger's home and were greatly impressed by his extensive collection of Pougny's finest works, which he had acquired over many years.



Fig. 135  
Sabine Weiss  
Xana Boguslavskaya and Jean Pougny,  
Paris, 1954  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

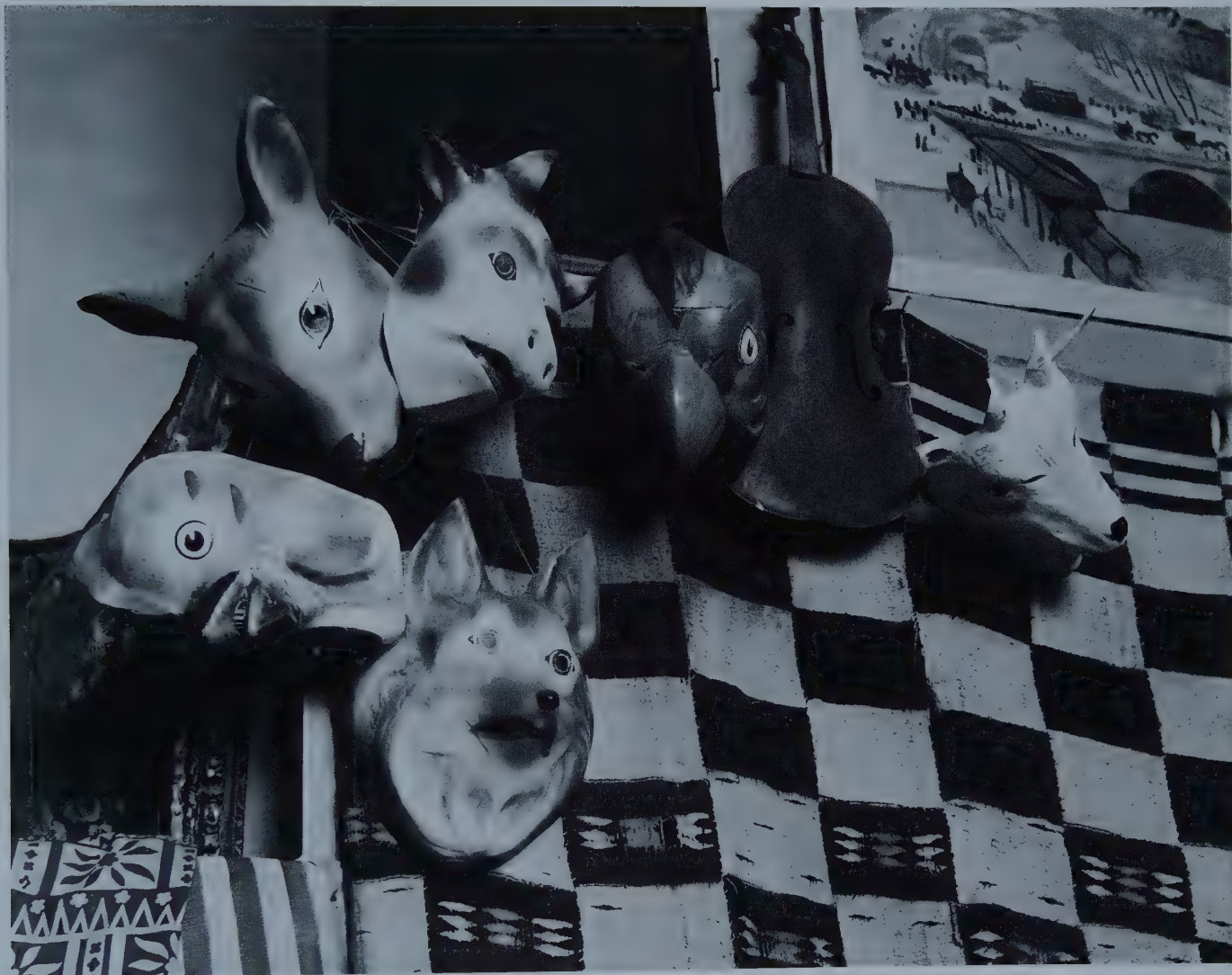



Abb. 136  
Eva Besnyö  
Jean Pougny's studio, Paris, 1954  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jacques Prévert    L'atelier de Pougny  
c'est tout le contraire d'un musée

**L'atelier de Pougny**

Objets restés en place  
animaux en allés  
comme ce chien qu'il a tant caressé  
cette fenêtre d'où il a tant regardé  
la rue où il a tant passé

La rue Notre Dame des champs  
il habite là encore  
il demeure là tout le temps  
comme il demeure toujours à Antibes  
au Café du Midi dont le patron un  
beau jour ou bien c'était une  
nuit, avec une corde a mis fin à ses jours à lui  
Jours de soleil et de soucis

Les photos grises noires et blanches  
les toiles  
les portraits sur les murs  
tout porte les couleurs de Pougny  
les couleurs de la joie de voir mêlées  
à celles de l'inquiétude de vivre

Choses et êtres escamotés par le  
temps qu'on surnomme souvent destin  
mais restitués intensément  
par la peinture  
le dessin

par les toiles aujourd'hui très loin  
la chaise noire sur fond rouge  
la foire du Trône  
le petit âne du Luxembourg  
ou ces marins à l'encre de Chine en Russie  
en révolution la nuit



Peinture heureuse et tendre  
et d'une très subtile innocence  
Petits êtres humains des rues et des jardins  
hauts en couleur  
comme des fleurs.

Toute la musique de la rue Vercingétorix comme  
la secrète rumeur d'une forêt  
et cela peint de main de maître  
de maître ni grand ni petit  
ni moyen  
De main de maître à danser, à peindre  
à sourire à aimer.

From: *Pougny. Dix Linogravures Originales 1914-1920*, Au vent d'Arles,  
Paris 1964.

Fig. 137  
Eva Besnyö  
Jean Pougny's studio, Paris, 1954  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Roman Gul

**I Bore Russia with Me<sup>1</sup>**

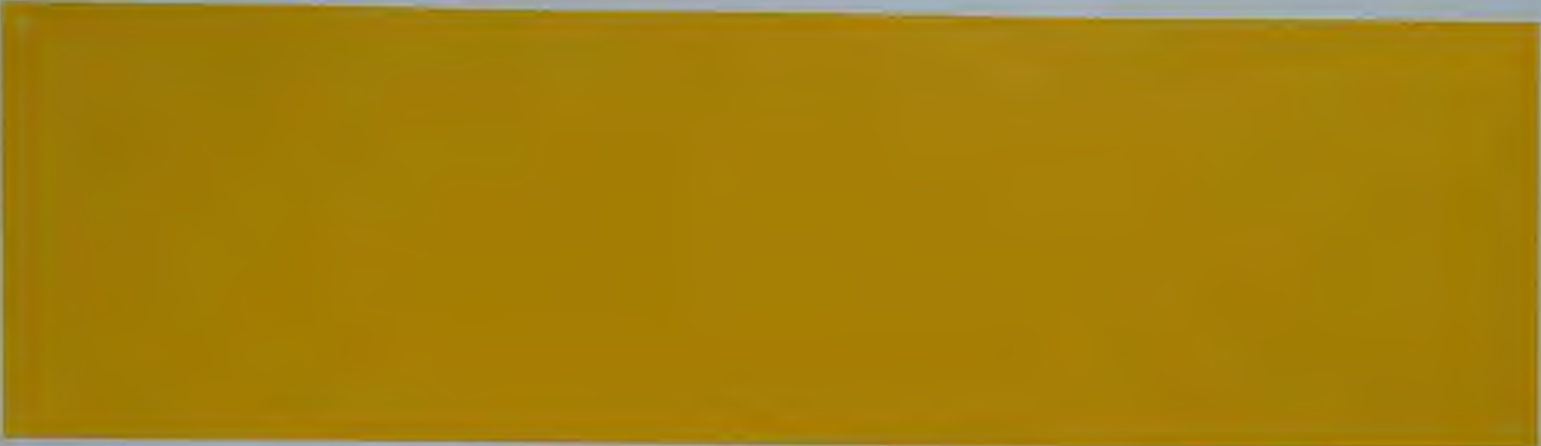


I think that it was Tolstoi who said somewhere that you have your best thoughts when you're not thinking about anything. Well, Montparnasse was just the place for that kind of mental state. Of course, sometimes I did meet some of my friends there, but I liked sitting alone better. I remember that I was once sitting by myself right by where people were passing up and down, when suddenly someone placed their hand on my neck and said, "There's that crazy Gul!" I looked round and saw Vanya Puni, whom I had known from my Berlin days. He was smiling but moved on, looking for someone else. As an artist Puni made a big name for himself in Paris. I was very fond of him and his wife, Xenia Boguslavskaya. What nice people!

Roman Gul. *Ia unios Rossiju: Apologiia emigratsii* [*I Bore Russia with Me: An Apology for Emigration*], (New York: Most, 1984), 2:132

Fig. 138  
Jean Pougny in his studio, Paris circa 1950  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

<sup>1</sup> The writer and journalist Roman Borisovich Gul (1896-1986) lived in Berlin and Paris before emigrating to New York. He describes below an episode that took place in Paris in the 1930s.



Gregorio Sciltian

**My Adventure<sup>1</sup>**

Pugni's studio was in a lugubrious courtyard, perhaps one of the most despondent in the world. On both sides arose long barracks made of just wood and glass that were painters' studios. A horrible stench of rubbish emanated from the courtyard [ . . . ].

The studios were inhabited by painters of all nations, who aspired to ephemeral laurels and to the success and glory of Montparnasse: Chinese, Japanese, blacks, Spaniards, Russians, Americans, Italians, Greeks, and many others [ . . . ].

Pugni had two adjacent studios. One was where he lived and the other (true, he did not use it much) where he worked and which he let me have.

Giovanni was a great guy, of an angelic kindness and an incredible laziness. The protagonist of Goncharov's novel *Oblomov* paled before him.<sup>2</sup> In comparison with Pugni even the Turk of Saint Stephen seemed full of dynamism. The filth and disorder of his studio were indescribable.

Relocating there with my furniture and pictures [ . . . ]. I tried to put things in order a bit, much to the surprise of my hosts. Giovanni Pugni, by origin Italian-or more precisely from the Vincenza region-was born in Saint Petersburg and spoke only Russian. He did not know Italian and knew nothing about Italy. Nevertheless, his face, his build, his gestures and manners were typically Italian. With his ravenlike hair and deep black eyes, he looked a bit like Totò.<sup>3</sup> He came from a family of illustrious actors and musicians. His grandfather or great grandfather had been a famous composer of ballets at the czar's court in Saint Petersburg and director of the Imperial Theater. His father had been first violinist for the Mariinski Theater.

<sup>1</sup> The episode described below by the Armenian painter Gregorio Sciltian (Grigori Shiltian, 1900–1985) would seem to date from the 1930s. He refers to "Giovanni Pugni" throughout.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the novel *Oblomov* (1859) by Ivan Alexandrovich Goncharov (1812–91), in which the hero, Oblomov, nurtures utopian plans for improving his lot, although he is unable to get out of bed in the morning.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to the Italian film star Totò (born Antonio de Curtis, 1898–1967), noted for his large, expressive eyes. Sciltian lived most of his émigré life in Italy.



But the most bizarre member of Giovanni's, or as he was known in Russian Vania's, family was his wife, Xana. At one time she had also been a painter. She was very beautiful, with a beauty typical of Cossack or Ukrainian women: fervid eyes, ample figure, great intelligence, and endowed with explosive energy-the kind of woman described by Sholokhov.<sup>4</sup> By the time I turned up she was a trifle faded, but she still amazed you with her tireless efforts to find work and launch the name of her husband. She was the prototype, the synthesis, and the high point of the characteristic type of the Russian woman, dedicated to her companion, who, with a will of iron, tries to promote him in all spheres so as to enhance his value and make his name [...]. All day long she ran around with Pugni's pictures under her arm. She infiltrated every artistic milieu, trying to convince everyone of Giovanni's genius and the value of his work. She networked, curried favor with critics, hobnobbed with dealers, brought in clients. By making hats and pullovers – and with heroic devotion – she enabled Giovanni to loll around on the sofa or fritter away the time with his dog going from one corner of the studio to the other.

I would generally arrive very early in the morning and set to work immediately. Giovanni Pugni used to wake up between eleven and twelve. Without washing or having breakfast, unshaven, he would turn up in my studio accompanied by his inseparable little dog. He would throw himself on the sofa and ask me to tell him something about my adventures in life, which amused him enormously. He was always in his pyjamas, looking very much like a pile of rags, and all you could see welling forth from this heap were the eyes, which, looking at you, seemed moist. Pugni's little dog, who was fonder of life and always trotting alongside right at his leg, jumped into Pugni's lap whenever he saw his master lying on the sofa. In this way Pugni listened to my conversation as he caressed his dog and smoked away, throwing the cigarette stubs onto the floor.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the Soviet writer Mikhail Alexandrovich Sholokhov (1865–1984), celebrated for his epic novels of Russian and Ukrainian life.



Fig. 139  
Clipping from a German newspaper  
with reproductions of drawings by  
Xana Boguslavskaya, mid-1920s  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 140  
Jean Pougny with his dog, Billy,  
Paris, 1954  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Once upon a time his little dog had been a lovely white poodle, but his long coat had become so dirty and black that he seemed more like the same kind of rag that enveloped his master and had therefore become part of the same mass. Whenever I looked at the sofa, I saw a hill of rags and hair and four absolutely identical eyes looking out – those of Vania and those of the dog, eyes replete with kindness, sweetness, and tenderness, which observed me and supplicated me to “go on!”

Inasmuch as I worked away assiduously, Giovanni too felt a certain excitement. So occasionally his hands would rummage around under the sofa or a crate or an armchair or seat and take out a bit of canvas askew in a frame, all wrinkled up, with the crusts of color long dried out, with traces of his dog’s paws or something worse, all enveloped in a thin coat of dust. He might also find an old paintbrush, forgotten in a corner, which he would then immerse in some solution or other (oil, gasoline, coffee dregs, or dog’s piss) mixed with cigarette ash or with the clots of colors that had accumulated both on the paintbrush and on the buckled palette. He then began to dab and rub signs and flecks on the creased and shabby canvas, creating commas, dots, and splashes which mixed with the clots and crust. In these tiny canvases someone gifted with imagination might have made out landscapes, still lifes, and also figures, just as you do when you stop to look at the arabesques on windowpanes that have steamed over or in the mud of puddles after the rain.

While he listened to what I was saying, he would abuse the canvas for a while. Then he would take another one and carry out the same operation, while his moist eyes followed me as I narrated away.

Towards evening, when I was wont to go out, his wife would enter the studio like a meteor after a hard day of socializing and searching for work. Whenever she found a canvas freshly painted by her husband, she was happy: “Vania! You’ve been working! How happy I am! But this is truly a masterpiece! I’ll take it to Marcel Bernheim tomorrow or maybe better to Bing. That’s



exactly his taste! What sensibility, what poetry, what a touch! But maybe Hessel would be even better. You'll see that he'll issue you a contract. This landscape is full of poetry [...]."

"Still life," Vanya's timid voice corrected.

"Doesn't matter," Xana went on, looking at me in triumph. "What is important is the profound sensibility, and that's what painting is all about."

In fact, the triumph was Xana's: today Pugini's has indeed become true painting. The dealers have signed the contracts, but unfortunately the authors – Pugini and his dog – have passed away.

Nevertheless, that also proved to be useful, for that's how a legend was created – so as to sell this dish of "pure painting", with its rather unpleasant smell of dog shit, to collectors, who seek emotions in this awful grimace that desecrators call "genuine art."

Nonetheless, the presence of poor, dear Giovanni did not trouble me at all. He was so good, so faithful and serene that his inertia imparted a kind of interior calm to me. His handsome head with its Leonardo lines held a deep attraction for me. But it was impossible to make him pose. He was like a stuffed mannequin without springs; he would always flop down on the sofa and just stretch out.

Gregorio Sciltian: *Mia avventura* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1963), 372–76.

Hans Richter  
**Xana Boguslavskaya**

Xenia, still an endearing person today, mourns her Jean, who died several years ago. His paintings – the most delicate impressionism, the expression of a delicate artist's soul – have found many collectors, so many that Xenia does not want to sell any more paintings. She preserves her and Jean's studio, in the same house as Léger's studio at 86, rue de Notre-Dame-des-Champs, in the state it was in on Jean's last day alive. [...] Meanwhile with inexhaustible energy she manages his name, his œuvre, and his exhibitions in Paris.

Hans Richter: *Naum Gabo, in Russen in Berlin. Literatur, Malerei, Theater, Film 1918–1933*, ed. Fritz Mierau (Leipzig 1987), 488.



Fig. 141  
Eva Besnyő  
Jean Pougny's studio, 1954  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 142  
Xana Boguslavskaya and  
Caroline Berninger, Nizza 1961  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Herman Berninger

### **The Great Adventure**

Au violon, cet instrument sublime,  
qui m'a fait rencontrer deux génies:

Jean Pougny et Gidon Kremer



Fig. 143  
Ivan Puni room in the exhibition "Chagall,  
Kandinski, Malewitsch und die Russische  
Avantgarde", Kunsthaus Zurich  
(29 January to 25 April 1999), with  
works by Ivan Puni from the Herman  
Berninger collection

The artistic city of Basel has the good fortune to have Guido Magnaguagno and his team in the stately building at Paul Sacher-Anlage that F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG, with great foresight and admirable generosity, constructed to house the work of Jean Tinguely. I have known Guido, who always radiates cheerfulness, since 1984, when he asked me to lend some works by Puni for his memorable Vassili Kandinski exhibition at the Kunsthaus Zürich. At the Russian avant-garde exhibition in the spring of 1999 he brought joy to my heart: he told me a pharmacist friend had seen Puni's 1919 futurist poster for a pharmacy in Petrograd and wanted permission to photograph the painting so that he could display a reproduction in his pharmacy. In May 2002 Guido Magnaguagno, accompanied by his affable colleagues, visited my home again after a long absence, in order to select several works from Puni's Russian period for the exhibition "Jean le Jeune". It was the first time he was able to get a complete picture of my collection, and his reaction was spontaneous. "We will have an exhibition in the Museum Jean Tinguely to show the people of Zurich what a unique collection of rarities of High Modernism they are hosting in their city."

That brings us to the present exhibition. In 1952, when I made the acquaintance of Puni in Paris as "Jean Pougny, peintre français d'origine russe, membre de la légion d'honneur" (he had modified the spelling of his name to conform to French phonetics). At that time the works from his Russian and Berlin periods and the art historical documents that are now exhibited here, most of which exist in a single copy, were largely unknown. His early paintings and reliefs have been rediscovered over a period of forty years in a never-ending search, a kind of art historical "archéologie successive." It was like a detective story.

The great barrier was the so-called "Iron Curtain". Already in the 1920s Stalin had banned the avant-garde from literature and art. The provincial museums that had been opened after 1917, in what would be a short-lived euphoria, to bring art closer to the people were closed again, and the works of the avant-garde that

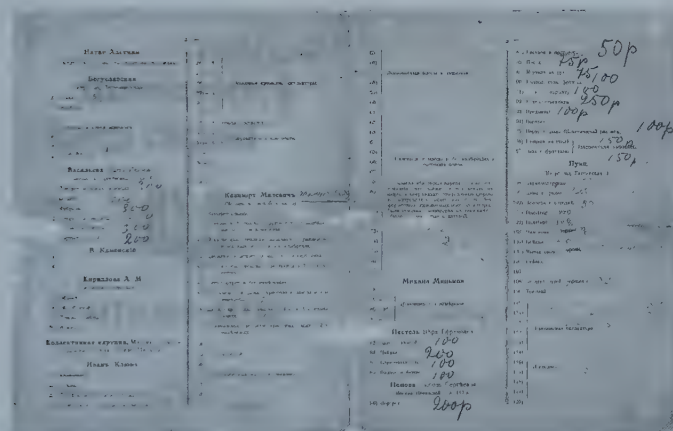
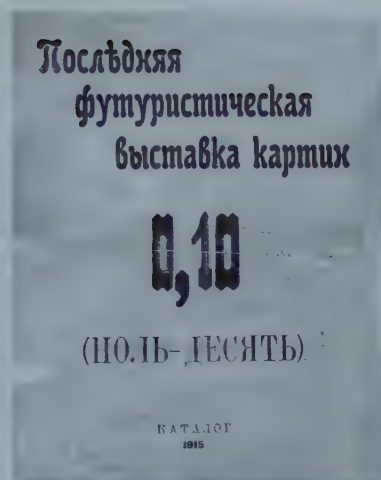


Fig. 144  
Catalogue for the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 1915/16:  
Cover and Checklist  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anatoli Lunacharski, the Commissar for Enlightenment, had bought with meager state funds were carted back to Leningrad under dreadful conditions—usually in cattle cars—to be hidden away with revulsion and utter lack of respect in the basements of the State Russian Museum and the Hermitage. Works in private hands were hidden away, for the owners risked being taken away to the GULAG. Pougny and his wife, Xana Boguslavskaya, had emigrated clandestinely in the winter of 1920 with three sleds across the frozen sea to Finland; they had only been able to take works on paper and historical documents with them, and they lost all hope that this banned art would see the light of day again in their lifetimes.

With perestroika the miracle occurred: the end of the cold war and the opening up of the Soviet Union to the West provided a welcome opportunity for Western museums to exhibit the unknown, revolutionary art of this period. For the Russian museums that were able to bring it out of their basements, and for the Ministry of Culture, the high lending fees they were able to collect in dollars represented a welcome source of income, and thus the exhibition activities of many Western institutions flourished for years after perestroika.

For me the last ten years were a time of unimaginable discoveries. Clearly many of Puni's works had escaped Xana's notice as she was cataloging them during the turbulent years of the revolution, when she herself was occupied with commissions for street decorations and propaganda. Basel now has the privilege to be the first to see these new discoveries, which were not included in the Catalogue raisonné whose first volume appeared in 1972.

It is critically important that the visitor to this exhibition be aware of the motives behind this art and the circumstances of misery and hunger under which it was created. The public in Basel is seeing paintings before which Grand Duke Nicholas, the czar's uncle, spat in contempt in 1915. The shocking futurist exhibitions that Puni organized around this time—the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 'Tramway V'" of 1915



and the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" of 1915–1916 – caused a (richly illustrated) tempest of insults in the press (fig. 145). And this in response to creations of historical dimensions, of timeless modernity, that are now icons of High Modernism.

It is an extraordinary stroke of good fortune that Basel has – at the Fondation Ruth und Peter Herzog – a previously unpublished set of photographs from the time of the Soviet Revolution and is able to view them together with works by Puni from the same period. Nothing could make the atmosphere of this brief but historically unique blaze of the avant-garde more palpable for the viewer. At the time the artists were driven by their idealism and their hope for a better, more socially conscious future. They brought about an aesthetic revolution that led the way for the political one, but in the end they reaped only bitter disappointment. Puni foresaw this development early and hence decided to leave the country. His destination was Paris, which he had gotten to know and learned to love during study trips there in 1910 and 1914. His route there passed through Berlin, which in the early 1920s provided refuge for 250,000 Russians of all stripes. Lacking an entry visa for France, Puni spent three years, from 1920 to 1923, in the German metropolis, in the seething atmosphere and galloping inflation of the mad twenties.

Puni soon came to play a leading role in Russian intellectual circles and was one of the initiators for the founding of a Russian cultural center, where every week lectures and lively discussions would take place, and a constant stream of visiting colleagues from Petrograd and Moscow would bring the latest news from both cities.

Puni's Berlin oeuvre has the stamp of the climate that prevailed there. The exhibition he presented in February 1921 at Herwarth Walden's Galerie Der Sturm was a Gesamtkunstwerk that has entered the history books. As part of Germano Celant's special exhibition "Ambiente/Arte" at the Venice Biennale of 1976 three walls from this Sturm exhibition were reconstructed



Типы на выставке футуристов «трамвай В».

(Рис. с натуры).

## НЪЧТО О „ТРАМВАЪ В“.

(Из открытїе футуристической выставки).

Въ Петроградѣ, открылась недавно новая «жизнь трамвая», которая ведетъ прямо—въ сумасшедшій домъ. Ни газетныя извѣщенія, ни предшрещденія побывавшихъ тамъ и возвратившихся въ добромъ здравіи домой—не помогаютъ. Публика дѣлаетъ, вѣстелъ, бранителъ и востанъ дѣлаетъ и тащить за собой младенцевъ въ курточкахъ и форменныхъ мундирчикахъ. Молодежь потышавается, иногда удачно остритъ, выывая умилненіе родительскихъ сердецъ и безконечную скорбь—моего...

Несчастное. Куда вы попали и какими по-сѣдствіями прожить вамъ въ будущемъ это, повидимому, вѣрное посѣщеніе.

Но молодежь не внемлетъ. Она окружена интересной группой художничка автора «Живовисныхъ рельефовъ 1914 года». Особенно хороши три дѣлца съ развѣтвляющимися отъ напри-

Слова студента вызываютъ новый крикъ возмѣна и все валата съ гамомъ проходить мимо меня къ другимъ замызганнымъ и заклепаннымъ всякимъ мушкетеръ кускамъ полотна въ рамкахъ—не рѣшаюсь назвать ихъ картинами.

И опущаюсь въ тѣлостномъ изоможеніи на стулъ и чувствую, что у меня футуристически напромождается въ мозгу сразу четыре мысли: Во-первыхъ, что глѣзъ не оправдываетъ средства и лаварету дѣлителей искусства каждый изъ насъ можетъ помочь болѣе правымъ и безопаснымъ способомъ.

Во-вторыхъ, если публика хочетъ веселить себя и дѣтей—вѣстѣ же Петроградѣ лучше истощити весельемъ, чѣмъ этотъ дурацкій балаганъ.

Въ третьихъ, если авторъ этого произведенія, которое виситъ передо мной, убѣжденъ въ сво-

Fig. 145

Anonymus

Clipping from the journal "Russia's Voice" with a review of the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 'Tramway V'" and caricatures of Xana Boguslavskaya.

Alexandra Exter, Vladimir Tatlin, Ivan Puni and Olga Rozanova, 1915  
Ivan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

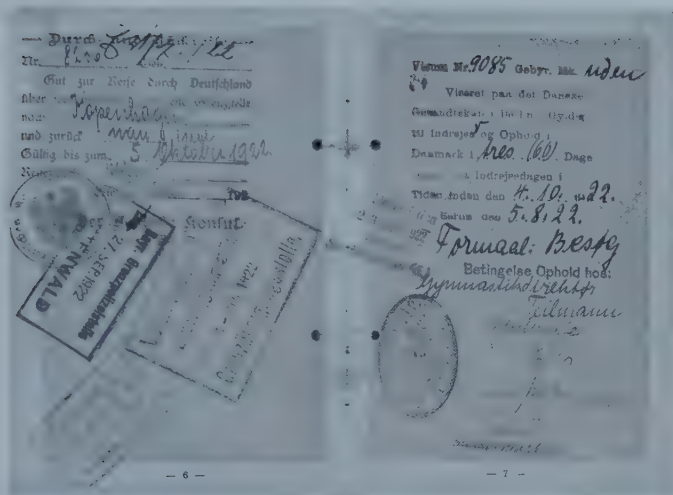


Fig. 146  
Herman Berninger's passport with  
permission to travel through Germany  
for Denmark, 1922  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 147  
Anonymus  
Ivan Puni "Joueur/Musikant", postcard  
for the journal *Der Futurismus*, Berlin-  
Charlottenburg, 1922  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

with my help, and they are shown again here in Basel. Some of Puni's paintings from his Berlin period have become symbols of their time, in particular his *Synthetischer Musiker* (Synthetic musician), which he painted for the "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung" at the Lehrter Bahnhof in 1922. The painting was immediately purchased by Herbert von Garvens, a prominent collector and art dealer from Hanover, and it has been lost since the Hitler years.

In 1922, at the age of eleven, having grown up in Tyrol during the war years, I was taken to Copenhagen for a year by a Danish friend of my father, who was, like him, a teacher. My first big trip, it took me through Kandinski's Murnau northward to Berlin, where we remained for a week. Because of the rampant inflation in Germany, my caretaker's Danish crowns made him as rich as Croesus, so we were able to experience the city's finest addresses, like the Hotel Kempinski, which was like a dream for me after the bleak war years. My patron, who was keenly interested in art, visited not only many museums but also the above-mentioned "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung", which is also represented in the exhibition in Basel with documents from the time. Despite the many years that have passed, I can still remember it, because the previous day I had been allowed to see my first Chaplin film, and the next day I was so amused by the Chaplinesque head of Puni's *Synthetischer Musiker*.

Forty-three years later, in 1965, I helped Pougny's widow, Xana – as I frequently did with her exhibition projects – with the installation of a Pougny retrospective at the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden. At the press reception she asked me to act as a guide for a woman who served as art reporter for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. At the end of our tour of the exhibition I mentioned the famous, lost Berlin painting, which was known from postcards and contemporary publications. To my surprise, she added a postscript to her very positive review in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a few lines mentioning the lost *Synthetischer Musiker*. Two weeks later I received a letter from a Danish woman



from Cologne with the news that the painting was not lost but hanging in her home on Bornholm Island. It turned out that Herbert von Garvens, who was homosexual and hence at risk under the National Socialist regime, had left Hanover and bought a house on Bornholm Island, where he lived surrounded by his favorite paintings. The woman from Cologne, Ms. Björn, had been his faithful housekeeper for many years, and he had left his house and art collection to her in his will. In view of my connection to Pougny and his oeuvre, she was happy to sell me the painting. For Berlin the rediscovery was a sensation. My friend Eberhard Roters, the founder of the Berlinische Galerie – a museum of works by artists who have lived and worked in Berlin – courted the painting for many years. He used to say that our situation was like that of a marriage: Berninger was the husband and Roters the lover, and both of them loved and desired the same object. In my fifty years of collecting it was the only work by Pougny that I ever parted with, for the benefit of the city of Berlin, where it was painted, and for my friend Roters. In the meantime it has been shown throughout the world, and it will forever remain a symbol of Berlin in the 1920s.

Decades later, in 2001, I was rewarded by fate. Four of Puni's Berlin paintings surfaced in Russia, including *Blinder Musiker* (Blind musician), a precursor to the *Synthetischer Musiker*. All of them were painted in 1921, and clearly they had been brought back to Russia by Russian friends who were also in Berlin temporarily. This was very fortunate, as they would probably have been lost had they remained in that city when it was destroyed. They are shown for the first time in the Museum Jean Tinguely, after eighty years in hiding. How did it begin? In 1952, on a beautiful afternoon in June. My wife was French, and we would often travel from Zurich to visit the French capital. In the postwar years the city, which had survived the war unscathed, blossomed as never before. Through the years of dictatorship and war the desire to experience Paris had been pent up in millions of Americans. The favorable exchange rate for the dollar made even luxury goods



Fig. 148  
Clipping from *Hamburger Illustrierte Zeitung* with an article on the "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung" and photograph of Ivan Puni's *Synthetischer Musiker* (Synthetic Musician), 1922  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

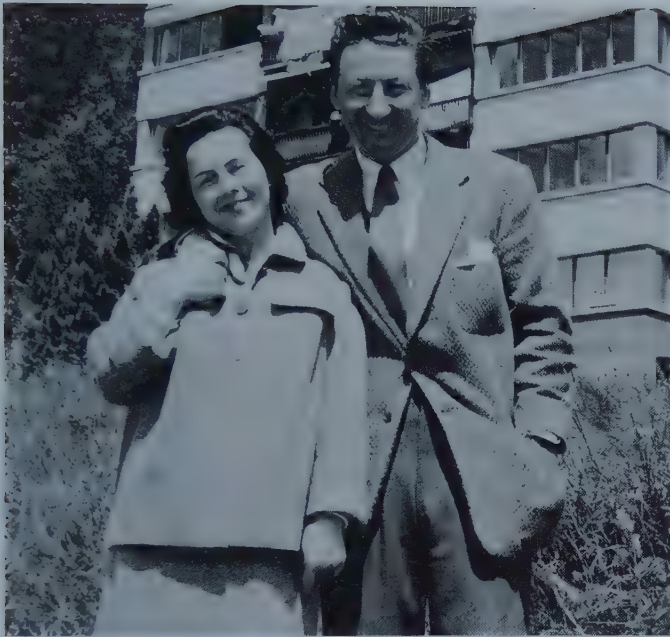


Fig. 149  
Caroline and Herman Berninger, 1950s

seem affordable. Foreigners were favored with a 20% tax reduction on the export of goods of all kinds.

The French genius, artisanship, and the many anonymous hands with a golden touch that were strewn through the apartments and studios of the old Paris buildings saw to it that the supply was in exquisite taste, and business was booming. It was the age of the French chanson – Charles Trenet, Edith Piaf, Gilbert Bécaud, Charles Aznavour, and Jacques Brel – of the Opéra Garnier; magnificent concerts; the unforgettable ballets of Marquis de Cuevas, which were the equal of those of Sergei Diaghilev; and, especially for the Americans, of cabarets like the Lido, the Casino de Paris, and the Moulin Rouge. The small cellar clubs of Saint-Germain-des-Prés flourished with exquisite young artists, above all Juliette Gréco.

It was the golden age of Paris fashion: the fashion houses like Balmain, Givenchy, Dior – in short, all of the haute couture houses – were packed; even the stairwells of the modeling rooms were filled with visitors. The models were of an elegance, nobility, and beauty that is no longer found today. Many of them were carried off the runway to marry American millionaires.

It was also the age of beautiful hats for women – the creations of the milliners of Paris were unmatched; the great designers had worldwide reputations. My wife took me along to Jeannette Colombier in avenue Matignon. Among the many female customers we were struck by a man of middle age with thinning hair. In front of a large wall mirror he was being presented with a series of charming hats, which he placed carefully on his head one after the other – it was a delicious spectacle. Madame Colombier revealed to us that the man was a big customer from New York who was on a shopping tour in Paris. He would always test the models he chose to be sure they sat well.

While having a cup of coffee at the Hôtel Bristol, just a few steps away, a gentleman asked me, in the uncomplicated manner so frequent among Americans, where I was from. He told me that he visited Pierre Cardin's new men's collection every year, to select a few dozen



models for which he would purchase the licensing rights and materials for his New York company.

For the men who were not in Paris on business but merely accompanying their beloveds and paying their bills, there was another activity: the many painting galleries, which were then very elegant. While the women were looking around in the fashion world, the men would look at paintings. Thus on that June afternoon I ended up across from the palais de l'Elysée in the Galerie Charpentier, which was rich in tradition. In the large rooms, with their sumptuous wall-to-wall carpets, the art that Paris produced alongside its many material goods was displayed under the general title "Ecole de Paris".

On my reverential, deliberate rounds my eye fell on a small, intimate painting with the title *Concert*, by an artist named Jean Pougny (fig. 150 and p. 231). A spark flew: in a modest Russian-Jewish-looking interior, somewhat reminiscent of Vitebsk, a violinist was playing, with his wife at the piano and their parents listening in armchairs. As I always did when seeing objects whose aura spoke to my soul, I asked myself what the person who created it might look like. I asked the woman from the gallery, who was discreetly waiting in the background, about the price: three thousand francs. When she saw the astonishment my face betrayed, she added, "Mais, Monsieur, Pougny, c'est une très grande signature!" She said the painter was advanced in years, in poor health, and no longer painting much. I asked for some time to think it over. Back in the hotel I picked up the heavy Paris telephone book. There was only one Pougny in the city, but with a misleading X for the first initial. I called, a polite male voice with a pleasant timbre and a slight Russian accent asked me to call back in an hour when his wife would be home. On my second call it was Xana, Pougny's wife, who politely, sincerely, and openly invited my wife and me for tea the following day. So the next day we climbed up three floors of the wooden spiral staircase at 86, rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, a few steps behind the boulevard du Montparnasse. To the right of



Fig. 150  
Jean Pougny  
*Concert*, 1952

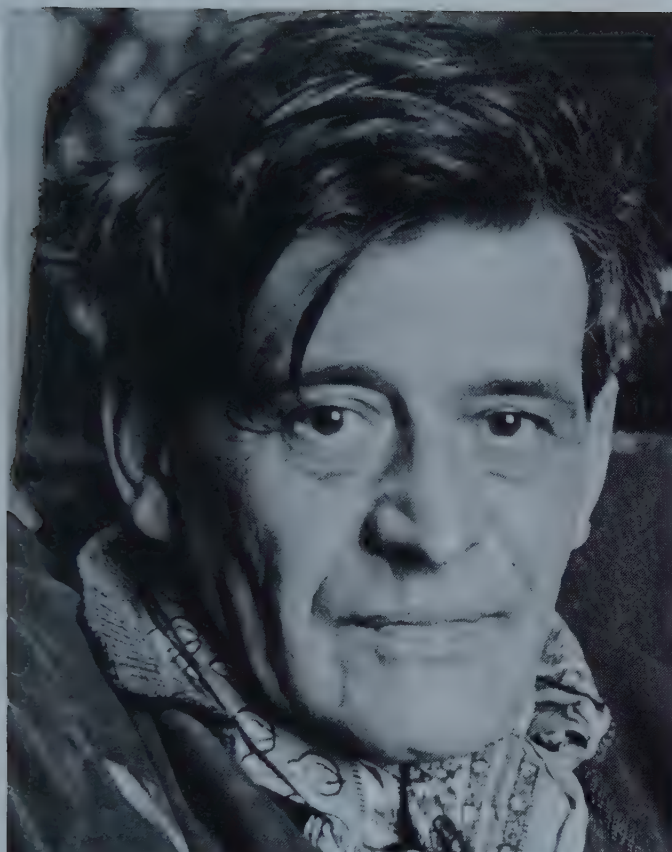


Fig. 151  
 Sabine Weiss  
 Jean Pougny at the age of 62, 1954  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

the large double doors there was a bellpull made of a pretty cloth ribbon; inside I heard a discreet little bell and the doors opened. Before us there was a radiant, pretty face with flashing, lively black eyes: Xana, whose friend I would be privileged to remain until the end of her life. The studio, a world from the Thousand and One Nights, a Russian-Oriental island in the heart of Paris. In the middle was Pougny, a noble face with magnificent dark eyes and a touch of melancholy. The spark of friendship flew, and this encounter would determine the course of my existence right up until today, fifty years later.

*Concert* was owned by the Galerie Charpentier, which had acquired it from Pougny. I bought it, and five additional paintings as well that the Pougny's showed me on our first visit.

Pougny was always being offered exclusive contracts by large Parisian art dealers, but he never wanted to commit himself. He painted relatively little, and every few years he would exhibit approximately two dozen paintings in the Galerie Coard, avenue Matignon. It was painting for connoisseurs, for an elite, which usually sold out in the first week of the exhibition. The collectors would cling to the precious paintings all their lives, and most of them would stay in the family, passing on to the next generation. That is the reason that a fine Pougny only rarely appears on the market, in France or abroad.

During my work on the *Catalogue raisonné* I discovered famous American names in Xana's list of works, collectors like me who had traveled home with a painting in their luggage but had not chosen to meet the artist personally. I was surprised to find Hemingway on the list, for he was a rough fellow, who loved bull fights, but he must have had a good portion of tenderness in him, to have been touched by the delicate poetry of Pougny's painting; Christian Herter, Eisenhower's secretary of state, who purchased a magnificent still life; Ingrid Bergman; Edward G. Robinson, the character actor from Hollywood but also a great lover of art; and finally Nelson Rockefeller, who purchased a beach scene. This



was the only painting that has been sold recently, from the United States. In 1998 Christie's of New York sought me out to authenticate it. It was from the estate of Mrs. Hilson, a passionate collector of porcelain in New York. Mrs. Hilson was one of those proverbial rich American widows, and as such she was a substantial supporter of the Republican Party, and Rockefeller had been a Republican governor for New York. She must have received the painting from him as a gesture of thanks. Because ninety percent of the auction was porcelain, I was able to acquire it at a relatively low price. Over the years a relationship of trust and friendship developed with the Pougny's and, because of the twenty-year difference in our ages, I came to be seen as a kind of adopted son. From that point on I had the first choice. In 1954 Pougny's landlord gave him the alternative of purchasing his studio, which he had been renting, or moving out. At the time he was living in comparatively good financial circumstances, but purchasing his studio was beyond his means. I stepped in for him.

In December 1956 I received a call from Xana: Pougny, who was suffering from heart problems, wanted me to visit. I found him in a very weak state on the couch in his studio. He felt that the end was near, and thus he wanted to thank me again for everything. I promised him that I would champion his work for the rest of my life and see to it that the historical material he had entrusted to me would come into the right hands. Two weeks later, on 28 December, he died. In a small, dreamlike Russian chapel in old Paris, in the warm light of countless candles, he was laid out in his coffin; next to it, on her knees, with her upper body and arms stretched out on the ground, was his companion, who at the age of sixteen had fallen in love with him and had been his brave, devoted mainstay all his life.

Xana would survive her husband by sixteen years. During that time we organized twelve museum retrospectives, prepared the *Catalogue raisonné*, and searched for lost works. The artistic activity of prerevolutionary Russia came to light for me very slowly. When



Fig. 152  
Xana Boguslavskaya, Iwan Puni,  
his sisters Olga and Julie and others, 1918  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Fig. 153  
Xana Boguslavskaya and Herwarth  
Walden, Berlin, 1920  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 154  
Eva Besnyö  
Xana Boguslavskaya in her Paris flat,  
1961  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

the first contemporary abstract paintings turned up in Paris in the early 1960s, Xana waved them off somewhat scornfully: "We did that in Russia fifty years ago!" In 1962 the London publishing house Thames and Hudson published Camilla Gray's study of the Russian avant-garde, *The Great Experiment: Russian Art, 1863–1922*. Gray had gone to Madame Pougny beforehand to obtain historical material, but without success, as Xana wanted to reserve it for the catalogue raisonné of Puni's works. The book was the first to draw attention to the Russian avant-garde, and it hit the book market like a bomb. Dealers throughout the world flung themselves excitedly, and sometimes unreflectively, at everything that was Russian and seemed to come from the avant-garde. The boom years followed, and with them a wide variety of forgeries.

In 1964 Xana traveled to Leningrad, where several of her artistic colleagues from the revolutionary years still lived, to whom Puni had entrusted the works he could not take with him when he emigrated. They had been preserved for forty years, through the revolution and the war, including the German blockade of Leningrad that lasted a year and a half, during which hundreds of thousands of the city's inhabitants starved to death. The painting *BANI* (Baths) (p. 64), which can be seen in this exhibition, even has damage from shrapnel. Xana accepted the paintings back and expressed her thanks with the highly coveted winter clothing and boots that she had brought with her in two large suitcases. An attaché from the French Embassy who was moving back to Paris with his household goods enabled her to bring back to Paris the artworks that had been stored in late 1919. Thanks to good connections she was also able to see the works by her husband that had been carted off to the basement rooms of the State Russian Museum. Now, forty years later, these works are sent throughout the world in exchange for high lending fees. The many exhibitions over the years, to which I have contributed Puni loans, have made it possible to meet museum directors, members of cultural ministries, and art historians – John E. Bowlt above all – all over the



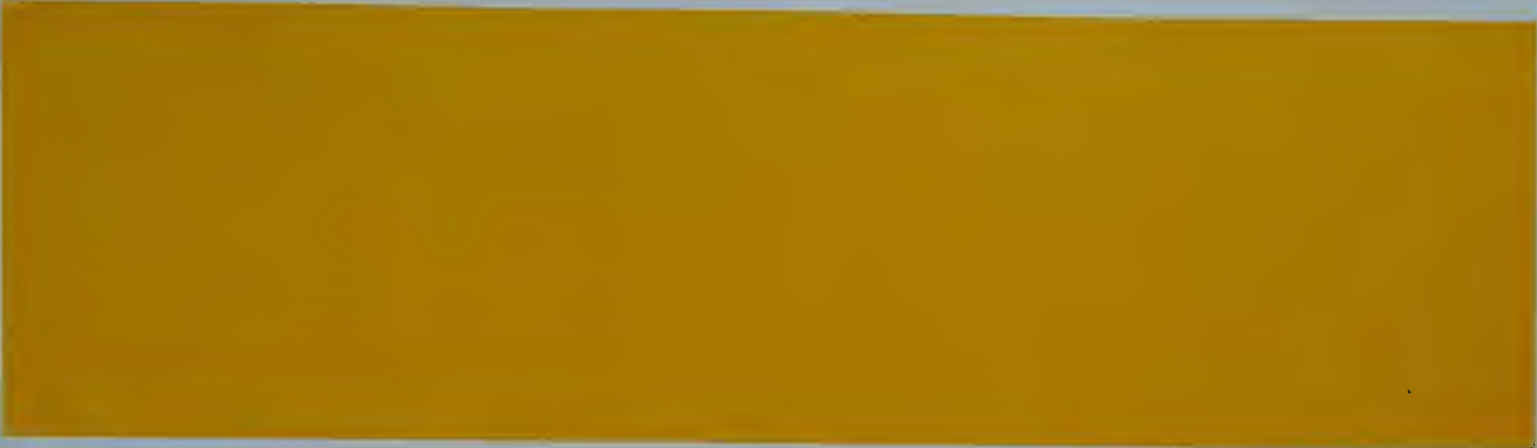
world, but especially in Russia, where the directors of museums are usually women. In the process friendships have developed, so that every new meeting means exchanging cordial embraces.

I know that these Russian women are proud of Puni, a son of their homeland, even if in Soviet times his decision to emigrate was very much held against him. Today this political narrow-mindedness is outdated. Thus the Russian minister of culture and Yevgenia Petrova of the State Russian Museum, whom I had invited to my home in Zurich, spontaneously proposed to house the paintings from Pougny's French period permanently in one of their three historical palaces in Petersburg. For the Francophile citizens of that city, this would be a magnificent gift.



Fig. 155  
Poster of the retrospective "Pougny"  
in front of the Kunsthaus Zurich, 1960  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Fig. 156  
Herman Berninger, Yevgenia Petrova,  
Deputy Director for Science,  
Saint Petersburg, and Josiv Kiblitki,  
at the exhibition "Chagall, Kandinski,  
Malewitsch und die Russische  
Avantgarde", Zurich, 1999  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Gotthard Jedlicka

**Jean Pougny**

The paintings that were hanging on the walls of his studio and standing on his easel at that time seemed in part like talented artistic experiments. It seemed to me that what I saw before me were painted debates about painting, and I had a feeling I knew which exhibitions of French painting he had visited in the past weeks and months. With respect to their motifs, the paintings reminded me in part of van Gogh; with respect to their style of execution, of Chaim Soutine, André Derain, and Pierre Bonnard; but they were still always Pougny's paintings. They had been painted quickly, as if in passing, with nondescript, discreet, seemingly blurred colors, using thin paint, and occasionally executed in a pointedly casual fashion. These paintings seemed to indicate how much time the painter had spent in front of them. Even for the attentive observer it must be difficult in these paintings to point to the seeds that have flourished so abundantly in the paintings of Pougny's last twenty years. Or am I mistaken? The world of their subject matter has in part remained the same in the later paintings: the facades of dreary city buildings; an underpass underneath a Metro running above street level; the top view of a square; a table with a bottle and glasses; many paintings showing nothing but a chair, with a few or many objects on the seat such as constitute the usual props of a painter's studio: paint box, palette, globe, carnival masks, walking stick, umbrella [...].

The painting of the mature Jean Pougny rests in a deep melancholy, lifting itself up from it and coming back to it again: the melancholy of a Russian, the melancholy of a Russian far from home – the melancholy of exile. But I know that I am almost alone in this view. Even within the smallest painting, no larger than a miniature, a whole world, his whole world is contained. The space that unfolds within the painting (underneath a surface resembling a tapestry) often seems like a shaft leading into the core of the earth, into the core of the painter's soul. The colors emerge glowing and blooming from the dark twilight of the depths, floating like water lilies on a dark pond. There is a lack of spatial clarity as one



moves into the depths – though this never gives reason for concern, because it is an expression of the very feeling of being alive – that corresponds to a lack of motivic clarity beyond the picture plane that at times seems to transform the painting into a metaphysical picture puzzle. Jean Pougny: decorator, ornamentalist, engraver of melancholy. His painting: a fusion of icon and tapestry, with a phlegmatic grace and a taste of immaculate perfection, which supersedes taste. And with each painting, even the smallest one, Pougny seems to attempt to overcome his deep-seated fear of life, which he can only overcome by painting. Just like the fear not to be able to finish the task he has taken on. [...]

From the moment he acknowledged his talent with its particular possibilities and its particular limits, the calm and steady development of his painting began, a maturing to sweetness, which was not to be endangered again until his death. Soon after his thirtieth year he restricted himself to the small format, which shows that he had attained inner certainty and thus freedom. Within this format, which he sometimes developed to extreme heights or widths and which suited him perfectly, he expressed himself in a greater, richer and more complex manner than some of his temporarily more famous contemporaries. He is greatest in some of his smallest pictures, and one day these pictures may represent him at the Musée de Louvre. He painted as if he had to create emergency rations for himself and others.

From: *Pougny*, exh. cat., Kunsthhaus Zurich (Zurich: Kunsthhaus Zurich, 1960).



Fig. 157  
Sabine Weiss  
Jean Pougny in his studio, Paris, 1954  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Auto Repair Shop*, 1928–1929, 50 x 61 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pouigny  
*Large Boulevards*, 1930, 65 x 81 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





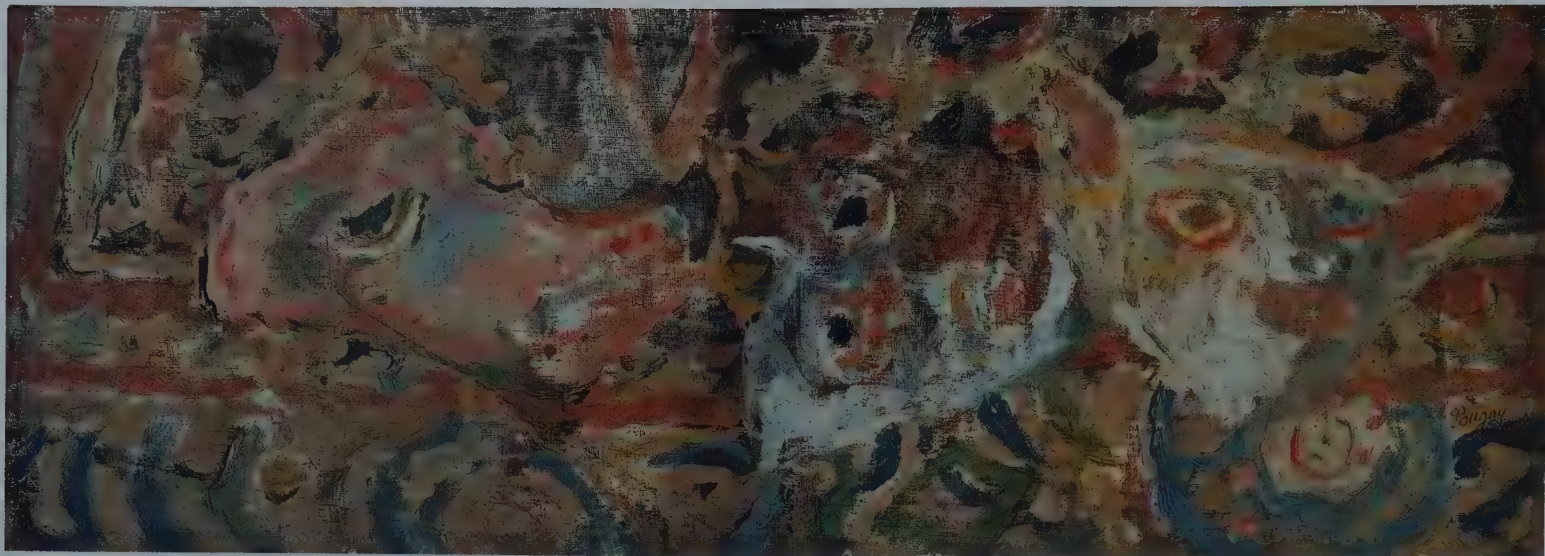
Jean Pougny  
*Italian Store*, 1930–1931, 54 x 65 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Chair, Globe, Violin, and Shell*, 1930–1931, 73 x 60 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Masks*, 1935, 19.5 x 53 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Jean Pouigny  
*The Seine: Winter Landscape*, 1943–1944, 11 x 23 cm, oil on canvas  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pouigny  
*In the Théâtre du Montparnasse*, 1943–1945, 13 x 15 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*White Chair and Box of Paints*, 1944, 31 x 39 cm, oil on canvas  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Harlequin with Red Mask*, 1944, 40 x 24 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*The Pianist*, 1944, 22 x 24 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
*Governess and Children*, 1944, 17.5 x 17 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Jean Pougny  
*The Seine in Spring*, 1946, 12 x 21.5 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on reinforced wood  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
*Studio*, 1947, 11 x 58 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Small Table with Bibelots*, 1947–1948, 46 x 38 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Orange Armchair*, 1949, 33 x 35.5 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Studio (Decorative Painting)*, 1950–1951, 75 x 67 cm, oil and gouache on reinforced cardboard  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Rue Vercingétorix*, 1955  
 50 x 15 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
*Interior with Striped Carpet*, 1950  
 75.5 x 24 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich







Jean Pougny  
*Beach in Cannes*, 1949  
 17.5 x 26.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
*Bois de Boulogne*, 1951  
 21.5 x 34 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

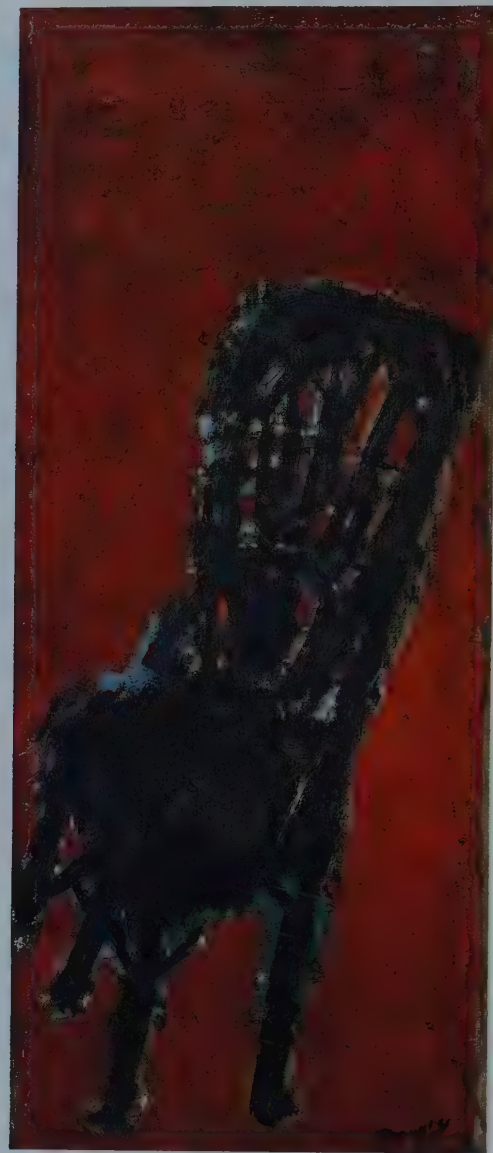
Jean Pougny  
*Harlequin Head*, 1952  
 26 x 25 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Concert*, 1952, 20.5 x 28 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Decorative Toile de Jouy and Black Cupboard, 1953*  
 80 x 22 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
*Black Chair against Red Background, 1955*  
 41.5 x 17 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Jardin du Luxembourg*, 1954  
 21 x 36.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Jean Pougny  
*Pink Beach*, 1954  
 29.5 x 36.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Jean Pougny  
*Montparnasse*, 1955-1956  
 23.5 x 37.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich





Jean Pougny  
*Still Life with Fruit*, 1956, 37 x 12 cm, oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Herman Berninger

**Memoirs:  
My Way through the Turbulent  
Twentieth Century**



**1911**

When the contractions started in the early afternoon of 19 December, the head nurse conveyed to my mother a request by the superintendent of the hospital that he and two of his students be allowed to be present at the birth. Since this was a public hospital in the city of Innsbruck, she did not want to be impolite but instead courageously decided to delay the delivery. The strategy proved successful. My birth occurred in the evening, when the unwelcome spectators were already on their way home. Thus I saw the light of day in the twilight of a short December day. After the birth my mother had an uncontrollable desire for a glass of beer fresh off the keg, but such drinks were not permitted at the hospital at that time. So she sent a maid to the nearest inn to smuggle a mug to her bed, hidden underneath a big winter scarf.

**1912**

My mother's father was a citizen and member of the town council of the rising industrial town of Steyr, where he had operated a file cutting factory since 1860. His name day was in May. On that occasion my mother wanted to send him a picture of his youngest grandchild, so she took me to the town's first photographer, who immortalized my image as a five-month-old naked on a polar bear rug.

**1916**

In the middle of the First World War Emperor Franz Josef died. The first official act of his successor, Emperor Karl I, was to visit the regional capitals together with his wife, Zita. The inhabitants of Innsbruck greeted the couple in front of the Hofburg, opposite the municipal theater and the court gardens, with the Nordkette as backdrop, and as a five-year-old boy at his mother's hand I had the pleasure of presenting a bouquet to Empress Zita.

Fig. 158  
Herman Berninger, Innsbruck, May 1912



## 1918

Two years later the war had been lost; the monarchy disintegrated, and the royal couple went into exile in Switzerland. The republic that had been proclaimed was facing hard times and a currency breakdown. I remember my mother giving me a beautiful, large 10,000 crown note with the words, "Hermann, get some bread." It was a heavy roll I got for that money, containing more polenta than flour. Twenty years earlier, when my mother had married, 10,000 crowns were still gold currency and constituted a large dowry. This event was the beginning of my lifelong distrust of the value of paper money and of bonds of any kind, which are often wrongly called securities. My mother had the same attitude; she believed in real estate, in a home of one's own, and in noble material assets, in contrast to my father, who as a teacher regarded patriotism as his civic duty and thus bought war bonds, which lost all their value in the course of a few years.

In the old Swiss humanitarian tradition, after the end of the war Swiss families volunteered to host, for the two months of summer vacation, Tyrolian children who had been through war. Thus as a seven-year-old I traveled by group transport on my first journey into beautiful neighboring Switzerland, right into the heart of the country, into Schwyz. My benefactors were the patrician Benziger family, who owned a stately home situated on a sunny slope, with a large terrace and a beautiful view south with the mountain Mythen in the background. Old Mrs. Benziger was the matron of the strict Catholic family—two of her sons were priests. I was treated nicely and enjoyed the garden; it was in that mild climate that I saw my first fig trees. Mrs. Benziger, who had trouble moving about, would use a toilet chair in her living room, and as her little foster child I had the honor of emptying her pot during my stay.

Eighty years later in 1998 some Russian friends, a well-known art historian whom I had met on the occasion of a Puni exhibition in the West, and her husband, an important sculptor from Moscow, visited me in Zurich. They did not know Inner Switzerland. I took them to

Luzern, then along Seestrasse to Brunnen. In Schwyz we parked the car to have a light dinner in a cozy restaurant. It was early evening, and the streets were empty. Looking for a knowledgeable local I saw an elderly gentleman coming in my direction. Greeting him I asked him to recommend a traditional restaurant. "This is a fortunate coincidence," he said, "I am on my way to my usual pub, the Schwyzerhüsli. Why don't you come along?" The Schwyzerhüsli was delicious, and we enjoyed the summer evening in a charming garden. It turned out that our fellow traveler was a famous specialist at the Contraves company and had visited Baikonur several times in connection with jobs for the space industry. This was an unexpected surprise for my Russian friends. When I told this congenial citizen of Schwyz of my two-month-long stay with the Benziger family in 1918, he said that their home was only 200 meters from our pub. On our way back to the car we visited the property, and there it stood on the large terrace, unchanged and sublime, like a symbol of the town of Schwyz, which had received me so hospitably.

## 1920

My father was a member of "Schlaraffia", a society for friendship, sociability, and humor that existed in all the major cities of the German-speaking countries. In that year the Schlaraffen of Zurich decided to invite their colleagues from Innsbruck. When Mr. Jesumann, who lived with his family in a grand mansion in Dolderstrasse, learned that my father had a nine-year-old boy and a twenty-year-old daughter, the same age as his own children, he suggested sending them to Zurich for a few weeks. It was my first contact with that beautiful city on the Limmat River, which was to become my permanent residence many years later. Today, on my walks in the small forest nearby – the Dolderwald – I always take the trail that leads to the beautiful terrace of the Grand Hotel, passing by the small wooden kiosk built in 1894 in the style of a chalet, where in 1920, when it was still in operation, I made my first acquaintance with that miracle called chocolate. The girls, for



Fig. 159  
Herman Berninger with his sister,  
Margarethe, known as Gretl,  
Innsbruck, 1920

whom the family would frequently invite young people into their house, eventually fell in love, and so it came about that in 1922 my sister got married and thus spent the rest of her long life in Zurich.

### 1922

My move to Denmark, which I have already described, occurred that year.<sup>1</sup> I went to school there for one year and learned the language. Subsequent political events, which led to the transfer of one of Ivan Puni's masterpieces to Bornholm, where I had the good fortune to rediscover it, made that country, with its civilized and charming inhabitants, a fateful place for me.

### 1923–1929

After returning to Innsbruck from this Danish intermezzo, I spent my relatively happy school years until graduation in Tyrol, with vacations spent in Versailles with Madame Lazard, a kind Jewish widow who took students as lodgers. Her apartment was quite near the château with its enormous park and world-famous water fountains. Of course I was attracted by nearby Paris, which worried her. When I wanted to visit the highly successful revue *Ça c'est Paris* with Mistinguett and Maurice Chevalier at the Moulin Rouge, her brother, a businessman living in Paris, supported my cause. The liberal aesthetic nudity glowing behind many a colorful ostrich feather was a fantastic experience for the sixteen-year-old student, inconceivable at the time in the holy land of Tyrol. During the show at 11 o'clock at night huge protest demonstrations started in Paris and particularly in Montmartre. That evening the news had come in from New York that the anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti had been sentenced to death. While the grand orchestra was playing at the Moulin Rouge and charming girls were swinging their legs, an enormous crowd of protesters thronged through the Paris boulevards, completely unnoticed from inside the casino. The facade of the Moulin Rouge

<sup>1</sup> See Herman Berninger's essay on Jean Pougny's years in Paris, pp. 202–212 in the present volume.



up to the red windmill on its roof consisted of strong crystal glass. It was an irresistible object of attack for the vandals in the crowd. When the spectators wanted to leave the building after midnight, we had to cross a carpet of broken glass thirty centimeters deep. This was a horror story for Madame Lazard, but her pensioner did come home intact and had material to tell the story of his adventures in French, that beautiful language I was to perfect at the time and which later, when I took a noble French creature to wife, was to become my second mother tongue. As a joke my French teacher and all my classmates in Innsbruck would henceforth pronounce my family name in French, and I would never again get rid of the name "Ber-nan-jey," which was always pronounced with a certain smile.

These student days in Innsbruck were a good time for us. In the early 1920s the Charleston from the States conquered the old continent. On the weekends we would take our girls and ride the bus into the mountains to the lovely holiday villages Igls and Lans, where one would dance to the latest beats from excellent jazz orchestras in the pubs and hotels. For the boys at that time knickerbockers were all the rage, while the girls would have their hair bobbed and wear the clothes and bell-shaped hats of the Charleston period, as shown many years later in the wonderful film *The Great Gatsby*. The best part was walking home with the girls through the dense woods to Innsbruck, which at that time still had a particularly romantic feeling.

It was also the time when the operettas of Franz Lehár, Emmerich Kalman, and Robert Stolz were highly in vogue; we would follow them every season with great enthusiasm, even if only from standing room. Youths would sing and whistle these immortal melodies and wallow in the dreamlike atmosphere of this eroticism translated into music.

### 1930–1935

In the summer of 1925 I had survived graduation and now had to choose a career. Thanks to the friendship with the family of Waldo Escher, which came from



Fig. 160  
Herman Berninger, Innsbruck, 1920



Fig. 161  
Herman Berninger, 1928



Fig. 162  
Herman Berninger with friend, 1928

Zurich but had been established in Alexandria since the beginning of the century, I was offered the opportunity to be trained as a cotton expert in an export company for Egyptian raw cotton. After one year as a trainee in the Zurich branch, my steamer arrived from Venice into the port of Alexandria in the summer of 1931. This place, which had always been highly cosmopolitan, marked a new era for me and was to exert a formative influence on my whole mentality and view of life.

The intense atmosphere of this Hellenistic metropolis with its fabulous history, founded by Alexander the Great 2,300 years ago, was ubiquitous. The historic ground beneath one's feet, now covered by the buildings of several centuries, was full of the remains of past epochs, as was the sea floor, which in the course of centuries had risen by several meters along the whole littoral, beginning from the eastern port, where once stood Alexandria's lighthouse, Pharos – one of the Seven Wonders of the World – as well as the Cleopatra's palace, which like so many other Egyptian monuments had been destroyed by terrible earthquakes. The names of streets and streetcar stops remind one to this day of the city's classical origins. Toward the beginning of the twentieth century, when a Belgian company was constructing the Ramleh Electric Railway (which leads along the coast from the old center to the royal palace in Montazah), archaeological remains were discovered during the leveling of the terrain; thus certain stops were given historical names such as Necropole de Chatby, Camp de César, and Bain de Cléopâtre.

The attraction and mystique of these past epochs turned us young people into amateur archeologists. In the 1930s it was still possible to conduct small-scale, not-too-ambitious excavations, not only on municipal ground, but throughout the whole nearby Western Libyan desert, where in former times the granaries of Rome had been situated by the sea. For security reasons we would always take two cars when going into the desert, and they would have balloon tires capable of coping with the sandy dirt roads. Further into the desert the remains of early Coptic monasteries could



be found, with a multitude of small objects like clay vessels, oil lamps, and coins. One would lie on the ground on one's back and hover in total silence under a crystal clear starry sky as if on a spacecraft.

My activity as a collector at that time, when Puni's early works were lying unsuspected in Russian basement depots, was focused on archeological objects, but also on aesthetically pleasing objects such as wonderful glazed Persian pottery from mosques and palaces, which could be discovered at market stalls and bought for little money. But I also bought paintings that were irresistible for me as a young man. The excellent Hungarian painter Endre Balint, who lived in Alexandria, was known for his marvelous pastel portraits of young women. Several of them were hung on the walls of my apartment. When the war broke out in 1939 and my furnishings were seized, it was the loss of these paintings that caused me the greatest pain.

At that time Egypt was a British colony, although it was diplomatically called a "British protectorate." The higher officers in the royal administration, which was headed by the British-appointed King Fuad, the father of the later King Faruk, were British, which meant that the country was run neatly and correctly. With its enormous fleet Great Britain was the only superpower, and Egypt, with the Suez canal as the free thoroughfare to India, was of crucial strategic importance. Social life, from which the local population was largely excluded, was shaped after the British tradition, with beautiful Sporting Clubs, the Royal Yacht Club (with its weekly regattas), and the horse races, surrounded by heavy betting.

During the winter season the ensembles of great European opera houses would come for guest performances, and the Parisian haute couture houses would visit the country regularly with their latest collections and their models. Alexandria, the second largest Mediterranean port after Marseilles, was a business metropolis of global importance through which practically the whole foreign trade of the country was conducted. The most important export good was Egypt's "white gold,"



Fig. 163  
Herman Berninger (fourth from right  
and front row middle) and friends



Fig. 164  
Herman Berninger, Alexandria, 1931

the most beautiful cotton in the world, of a quality that only this climate and the fertile soil of the Nile Valley could produce. Its classification and purchase took place at the cotton exchange in the port of Minet el Bassal. In a Babylonian atmosphere, people of diverse backgrounds and languages would converse as good colleagues. It was a breeding ground for generous and tolerant cosmopolitans. I owe my worldview and philosophy of life to these formative years, and probably also the ability to survive the cataclysm in world politics that was to come. Upon my arrival, on the recommendation of a young lawyer from Vienna, I was put up in a guest-house for young businesspeople from Europe, run by a Bohemian couple in a former mansion in a small park. Already at that time there were among the eleven regular guests some young Jewish people, who at this early date had been forced to leave their homeland because of rising National Socialism.

I had soon started to look for an apartment of my own and found one to rent in the top floor of a new building in the beautiful Avenue Nahas Pascha, which was flanked by high palm trees. It had a good view of the enormous Alexandria Sporting Club on the other side of the street, with a horse track on the periphery, a clubhouse in the center, a swimming pool, tennis and squash courts, and an eighteen-hole golf course. As a member of the club one could cut a bunch of roses from the club's rose garden for ten piastres, which was the equivalent of a tenth of a pound sterling, and this I would do every week to brighten up my home.

As a music enthusiast I wanted to buy a good piano. In the best music shop of the city I was assisted by an educated young man of my age by the name of Jonny Goldenberg, a specialist in musical instruments, who had emigrated from Hamburg to Alexandria. He helped me get a Bösendorfer grand piano on good terms. On the occasion of a visit to my place he asked if I might be interested in joining him at one of the tea parties that Baron de Menasce held every now and then for his friends. His servant led us into the first floor of his luxurious home, where in a hall the forty-five-year-old baron



was sitting at the head of a long table, with seven young people alongside him. After a warm welcome by the host I sat down with my friend. It was clear: I had stumbled into the baron's harem. Later he proudly showed me a number of cushions he had embroidered himself, one of his other hobbies. Our conversation eventually turned to Europe and his beloved Berlin. The fact that Hitler had risen to power did not affect him so much. What broke his heart rather was the fact that he could not visit the delightful friends he had there. This was for me the only visit, since I belonged to a different faculty. And that was a fact that hit me like a bolt from the blue.

My parents in Austria had asked me to look for a nice antique Persian rug for their large living room. After the death of a rich businessman from Lebanon who had been established in Alexandria, the furnishings of his palace came up for auction – among them his valuable collection of antique carpets. On the afternoon on which they were up for sale in the large lobby of the house, surrounded by numerous interested buyers, I climbed up some steps of the marble stairs to have a better view of the pieces, which were successively being displayed. I bought an antique tabriz, went to the cashier and paid with a check. The next morning, when I was at the exchange classifying cotton, the phone rang. Our Arabian assistant gave me a sign that the call was for me. There was a pleasant female voice at the other end of the line. "Je suis Marcelle Cohen. Je vous ai vu hier à la vente. Je voudrais vous rencontrer." I was always rather careful in making new acquaintances, but this time my curiosity lead me to accept an appointment for five o'clock tea at the clubhouse of the Sporting Club, of which she too was a member. At the appointed hour I installed myself in a fauteuil, and very soon a fairly tall, pretty creature of good build and with full, curly, brunette hair stood in front of me. Seventeen-year-old Marcelle was the daughter of a prominent Alexandrian businessman. We became friends, and over the following two years we shared many delightful hours, until she followed her father's wishes



Fig. 165  
Herman Berninger, Alexandria, 1931

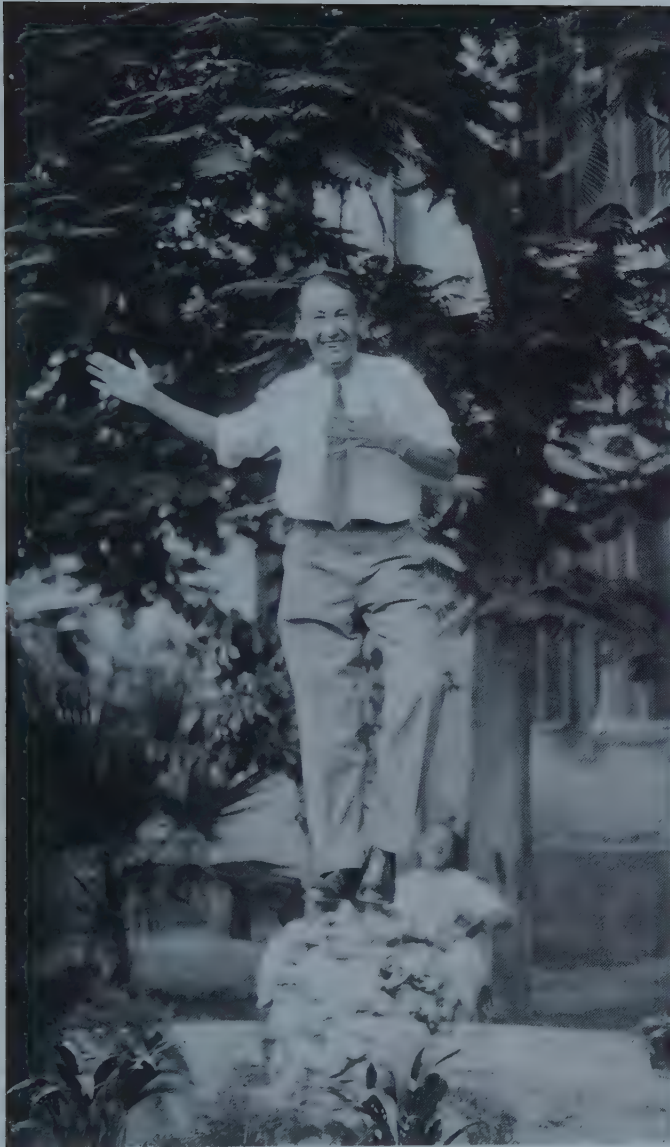


Fig. 166  
Herman Berninger, Alexandria, 1931

and began her university studies at the Sorbonne. Ever since she has been present at every shower I take, since she had been amused by the soap I used while with her. It was the Pears soap used also at the British court, which was made from a base of a precious tar, reminiscent of the sea and ships. It was also used at the Yachting Club. Of course, the refined perfume of a Parisian product would have suited her better.

#### 1936

The ensemble of Milan's La Scala came to Egypt, with Verdi's inevitable *Aida* as part of their program. The opera, which had been composed for the occasion of the Suez canal's opening, was performed in Alexandria too and became a fateful event in my life. It contained a brief ballet intermezzo, in which a young Nubian woman presented an erotic dance. The graceful creature, her almost nude body covered in golden bronze makeup, performed an enchanting dance, which charmed and haunted me for weeks. About two months later my boss Waldo Escher told me that we had been invited to lunch with Monsieur Salinas. He was our broker for forward transactions in cotton, which we did in order to hedge the sale of cotton to mills in the far future. We arrived at the restaurant and were introduced to a couple that had also been invited: a gentleman in his fifties, Monsieur Aghion, an architect, and his twenty-eight-year-old wife, her pretty face covered to the nose by a fine veil attached to her hat. I was astounded, for she was the enchanting Nubian dancer from *Aida*. Daisy – such was her stage name – told me that she had come to Cairo a few years ago with the ballet of the Budapest Opera. Monsieur Aghion had fallen in love with her and married her. Unknown to the society of Alexandria, the liaison had soon turned into a marriage of convenience. We became friends.

#### 1938

That year saw the annexation of Austria into the "Greater German Reich." The German consulate general in



Alexandria asked all Austrians to exchange their passports for German ones. A few months later I received a telephone call from a director of the Alexandrian branch of Dresdner Bank. He asked me to visit him at the bank. He congratulated me on my newly acquired citizenship and said, "It is now time to join the NSDAP." As it turned out he had something like a Gauleiter function for German expatriates living in Egypt. I thanked him politely and diplomatically for the "privilege" offered, which I said I was unable to accept, being the authorized signatory for a Swiss wholesale trade company. One year later, in 1939, when I was traveling in Europe, he was taken away by British military police and brought into a camp that had been set up for enemy aliens near the Suez canal.

### 1939

When the time came for my three-month-long summer journey to Europe, which meant both vacation and business visits, Daisy joined me. We took the car on board the ship to Athens, where we spent a week in quiet, isolated pine groves perfumed by resin and blooming thyme, camping amid forgotten and overgrown ruins of antiquity. In a Roman amphitheater at the foot of the Acropolis we listened to a symphony concert with an orchestra on tour from Germany; the rather small and dainty conductor was unknown to us. It was Herbert von Karajan in his early years, winning his first laurels in the ruins of Athens. Our trip then led us through the Bosphorus to Constanza by the Black Sea, then along golden cornfields tall as a man and on to Bucharest, where I had to visit some customers. On our way to Budapest we then stopped in Borsec in the Transylvanian Carpathians, a centuries-old bath, hidden away within unspoiled nature, where bears still lived in the deep forests. Through the fertile plains of the Hungarian lowlands we then proceeded on country roads toward Budapest, the hometown of my Nubian ballerina, passing huge flocks of geese and farmers with wheelbarrows full of wonderfully ripe apricots. Underneath old chestnut trees people were



Fig. 167  
Herman Berninger, Alexandria, 1935

enjoying the mild summer days with Hungarian cuisine and Tokay wine, occasionally accompanied by melancholic music from the twelve-member gypsy orchestra. My business destinations were the great Bavarian textile companies in Augsburg, Erlangen, Bamberg, and Hof. On the way there we took a lunch break in an old garden restaurant at the Ring in Vienna. I parked the car. An old headwaiter welcomed us. With an incredulous glance at the Arabian license plate on my small Pontiac and the E.T. (Egyptian Territory) on the country plate he said, "Where do you come from?"—"From Egypt."—"But, good heavens, you must go back immediately. There is a war coming up, eighteen of my young employees have already been drafted and are at the Polish border." It turned out he was right, but I still had to pay my business visits in Bavaria. On our way we saw posters up for the Wagner festival in Bayreuth. I suggested to Daisy that we spend the night near the festival theater to see a performance. We took a room at a guesthouse and went to the opera house. It was 7 P.M., and *Tristan und Isolde* had already begun, with no seats available. It was a closed performance for "Kraft durch Freude" (Strength through joy) an institution invented by Goebbels. After the end of Act I, when the "Kraft durch Freude" people were in the garden quenching their thirst with beer, I went up to a couple that looked bored and told them I had come from Egypt in order to see a performance at the festival theater and that I would be overjoyed if they could give me their seats for the rest of the show. Somewhat skeptical, but encouraged by the fifty-mark bill in my hand, they eventually agreed. For us the performance was a delight up to the final apotheosis, even though some of the audience were overcome by sleep. On our way home around midnight we noticed a note and a condom attached to a tree trunk in the front garden of the festival theater. It read: "In diesem schlichten Kleide verlor ich Kraft durch Freude" (In this simple dress I lost strength through joy). It was heartwarming to realize that there were still some people who had retained their sense of irony and humor.

Back at the guesthouse after a long day we fell into a deep sleep. Around three o'clock in the morning someone knocked at our door. Two men with hats and dark leather jackets appeared: secret police. They had seen the foreign license plate on our car. Our passports, which we had deposited at the reception desk, were in order. But they wanted to know the cause of our journey. Vacation, combined with business visits to German customers. Daisy had an Italian passport; I had a German one. It was the time of the so-called Rome-Berlin axis, so they had no objections.

The next morning we agreed: It was time to leave the Greater German Reich in the direction of Tyrol and Switzerland. But when I wanted to refill the tank at a gas station, we were told: No more than five liters of gasoline. This rationing had been ordered throughout the country, which was further indication that war was about to begin. Our trip back became a begging journey of five-liter rations. In Innsbruck I went to the bank to withdraw the rest of the registered German currency I had bought in Egypt. This was tourist currency, which travelers from foreign countries would buy for hard currency at a reduced rate and which they could then successively withdraw in Germany, the sum being entered in their passports. Two thousand marks remained, which we did not need anymore, and I gave them to my aunt, who had often given me pocket money when I was a boy. At the border station in Schaan the German customs officer, who had noticed the withdrawal registered in my passport, asked me about the money. He would not believe that I had given it to my aunt. A search was initiated at the side of the road, first in all our baggage, and then the customs mechanic also searched in and under our car. After one hour of fruitless harassment we were finally allowed to leave the country. The Swiss customs officers ten meters down the road had witnessed the whole scene. They let us enter the country without checking on us, remarking in their Swiss dialect: "You have suffered enough already." It was September 1939. Six years later, in 1945, the dream of the thousand-year Reich was over.



When the war began, it was clear that we could not return to Egypt. My apartment and all my funds in Alexandria had been seized. Trade with the hostile part of Europe was impossible. Years ago Daisy had gone to Davos to visit a colleague from the ballet who had fallen ill, and knew that foreigners who went in for medical treatment there and who had sufficient funds were given a permit for unlimited stay at the health resort. So with our last gasoline ration we drove past frequent military checkpoints to Davos, took care of the car, and rented a room at the mountain guesthouse Strelalp, which was run by the Buol family. It was situated two hundred meters above the Schatzalp sanatorium, Thomas Mann's Magic Mountain. The price was 12.50 francs per person for a small but cozy twin-bedded room. In November, when it started snowing, we started to look for a small furnished apartment and had no trouble finding one in the deserted village. It was in Davos-Dorf in "Haus Sunnegarte", which belonged to the Hartkopf family. The rent was 120 francs per month. Besides the local people and the sanatorium patients there was only a small group of foreigners from the Allied nations who had gotten stuck in that place due to the outbreak of the war. They all had problems getting money transferred from their home countries, since Switzerland was seen as being in danger of invasion. Soon came special news flashes about successful Wehrmacht operations and the dull knocking messages from BBC London, listening to which was a capital offense in Germany. We confided in a lung specialist, Dr. Wolf, who covered our stay on medical grounds. Having dealt with raw cotton for many years I was classified as an allergy patient. I had to come fortnightly for a control checkup, during which I would be given a calcium shot. Besides sports colleagues from Davos our social contacts were limited to allied friends, who like us were doomed to spend their time playing golf in summer and curling in winter.

#### 1940-1945

When the German offensive in the West started and the Netherlands, Belgium, and the north of France were overrun, the atmosphere in Davos became livelier. People in the lowlands became afraid of attacks, and whoever could afford it left their homes in the lowlands and moved into the "reduit" in the mountains, where as a preventive measure the bank reserves and safes had also been transferred. Thus the reopened hotels filled with affluent Swiss families, orchestras were engaged, and people were dancing in the bars and dance halls. From occupied France prominent artists such as Maurice Chevalier and even a number of excellent chansonniers, mostly women, were engaged for guest shows at the hotels.

Ever since their founding toward the beginning of the century, when the healing climate of the Landwassertal was discovered, a number of Davos sanatoriums had been in the possession of the German state. On the basis of international treaties they were open for a stream of German patients coming and going. Thus Davos became a place fraught with considerable risk of espionage, of which I got a taste when gradually military setbacks began to occur. My relatively discrete contact with "enemy" subjects eventually resulted in a draft order by the German consulate for a military medical examination in a German military sanatorium. It led to a temporary exemption. After Stalingrad I was denounced by an evil-minded person and once again received a draft order. Dr. Naeser, who was married to a Swiss woman, served as a German military doctor. During the examination I claimed asthmatic complaints. In the course of a telephone conversation he asked Dr. Wolf whether he thought I was fit for military service according to Swiss standards. The answer was "certainly not." When Dr. Naeser then declared me definitively not fit for service, I revealed to him the fact that my renewed summons had been due to a denunciation. His commentary was succinct and clear: "Again!" During the final stages of the war Dr. Naeser was ordered back to Germany and did not return alive.



Fig. 168  
Herman Berninger with friends  
on the terrace of Hotel Central,  
Davos, 1941

For holders of German passports without a permanent residence permit, the war years in Switzerland were a balancing act. Unfortunately, there were officials in the administration who entertained a secret sympathy for the regime in Germany. Open opposition to the regime would have led to a withdrawal of the German papers, which in turn would have been grounds for expulsion from Switzerland. So the end of the war in 1945 was a relief from a permanently precarious situation. Already in 1943, my companion, whose strategy had saved me from a worse fate, had moved to her sister in Lugano, longing for a warmer climate, and after the end of the war she could return to Egypt.

#### 1946–1949

For five years the war had prevented me from following my profession, and I had reached rock bottom. Most of my European customers in the textile industry were also left with nothing, their factories in ruins.

My first business success – to a degree totally unexpected – I owe to a small dachshund!

Defeated Germany had been divided into several zones, which were occupied by British, American, French, and Russian troops. In 1948 the Marshall Plan was drawn up for the gradual reconstruction of the Western zones that were not under Russian occupation. It was designed to finance the reconstruction and at the same time stimulate the American export trade. The whole trade business was put into the hands of the JEIA (Joint Export Import Agency), an organization within the U.S. military administration based in Frankfurt. They were in charge of the purchase of all goods, which had to be of exclusively American provenance. For the French-occupied zone in southwestern Germany purchasing had been delegated to the French military administration, which was installed at a luxury hotel in Baden-Baden. From Zurich I contacted some friends in the American raw cotton business in the Southern states in order to get offers for the purchases advertised in Baden-Baden, which I would then be able to submit there. On the afternoon that was scheduled for the decision con-



cerning the purchase I was sitting on a bench in a hotel hallway, not far from the meeting room, when from the end of the hallway a small dachshund approached me at a slow trot, sniffed my legs, and let me stroke his back. A smart-looking gentleman in civilian clothes with the relaxed air of a Briton stopped a few meters behind the dog and said in English, "He likes you-what are you here for?" I introduced my-self and said that I had come from Zurich and was waiting for the decision concerning the cotton offers I had submitted from American companies. He took note of my information and with a "See you later" went into the conference room. After half an hour I was asked into the room and told that I would be given an order for 2,300 tons.

Larry O'Toole, the small dachshund's master, later told me in private what had taken place behind the door: The French military officers present at the meeting had gone through a pile of submitted offers and suggested that the orders be given to the three cheapest suppliers. My offer had not been in the pile. O'Toole, who apparently had been appointed as a controller by the Americans, had replied that they seemed to have forgotten the offer by Mr. Berninger from Zurich. Like it or not, they had to go through the pile again, with the result that my suppressed offer came to light. It was the cheapest one. Both the U.S. administration and well-informed trade circles knew that the French team was corrupt and favored certain suppliers. But until then no one had any evidence. The acquaintance that had emerged from the meeting with the little dachshund and from our mutual sympathy had led to this evidence and thus to a quick success, from which we both benefited. I quickly went back to Zurich, and in the middle of the night I conveyed the orders to Memphis. They were so large that they had to be divided up and given to several companies. The news hit the American business world like a bomb. A stranger had succeeded in "breaking the bank at Monte Carlo." I received calls and offers from a number of prominent cotton companies, and after a long and arduous lean period I was back on my feet again.



Fig. 169  
Caroline and Herman Berninger  
with their best man on the day of their civil  
marriage ceremony, Davos, 1948



Fig. 170  
Caroline and Herman Berninger, 1954

Larry O'Toole was a member of the British secret service. He knew Greek perfectly, and after the German occupation of Greece he was dropped in the Greek mountains via parachute to organize the resistance movement. After the end of the war he took the job as a controller in Baden-Baden. After the Marshall Plan he was then stationed in another hot spot: the divided city of Berlin. Larry, his wife, his dachshund, and I remained loyal friends for many years.

After it had become clear that I would not be able to return to my original job in Egypt until Europe had recovered, I decided to apply for Swiss citizenship. My friends in Egypt, Waldo Escher and Christoph von Planta, who had worked as an officer in the Swiss general staff during the war, supported my application with Dr. Rothmund, the chief of the Eidgenössische Fremdenpolizei, the Swiss police department dealing with aliens. But I needed a municipality willing to take me as a citizen. I was thinking of Davos, but my friends there told me that as a Catholic candidate, even though an atheist, I would stand no chance. They gave me the address of a lawyer in Chur, who would successfully deal with my case. After a brief introduction he took up the phone, dialed and spoke. "Buon giorno Signor Presidente, io ho qui un cattolico di buona situazione" (Good morning, Mr. President, I have here a Catholic of good standing). I promptly got an appointment, and the next day we started in his car on a breakneck drive to the end of the world: to Arvigo, which was a village of just a few houses at the end of Valle Calanca. The point was a mere formality: to present the candidate. Everything else went, as they say in French, "comme sur des roulettes" – without a hitch. The lawyer in Chur took the agreed sum of 6,000 Swiss francs. Thanks to my clean record, the canton and the federation gave their blessings to the deal. I became a citizen of Arvigo, and so did Chou Chou – the charming French woman whom I had met and fallen in love with already in 1943 and married in 1948.

Epilogue: A year later I was about to cross the street in front of the train station Davos-Platz, when from the



Hotel Terminus on the opposite side a hotel assistant in a green apron passed me carrying a guest's two heavy cases. It was the Signor Presidente!

### 1952–2003

I have already described the meeting with Pougny and his wife in Paris and the consequences of this friendship, which became a great adventure for me.

The years of reconstruction in the years after the war, rapid technological developments, and prosperity had their impact on the global economy. Beginning in the 1960s, a modern competitive textile industry emerged in the Third World, particularly in Asia, with slave wages only a fraction of European wages. This led to the shrinking and dying of the European cotton industry. With this development, my profession had become obsolete. Already by the end of 1970 I was free to dedicate myself wholly to my passion: fully uncovering the work of Puni, this immense master and pioneer of early High Modernism, and making it accessible to humankind.

To be honored alongside Ivan Puni with this historical show in the wonderful museum Jean Tinguely in Basel, thanks to Guido Magnaguagno and the F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG, will remain the culmination of my life.

Thank you for your patience in reading this rather long account of my experiences.



Fig. 171  
Heinz Stahlhut in conversation  
with Herman Berninger, Basel, 2002

**Works and Documents**  
**from the Collection Herman Berninger**  
 Paintings, Drawings, and Prints

Worktitles proven original are given in italics.

The abbreviation "Berninger/Cartier" refers to Herman Berninger and Jean-Albert Cartier:  
*Pougny: Jean Pougny (Iwan Puni), 1892–1956: Catalogue de l'œuvre. Vol. 1, Les années d'avantgarde: Russie – Berlin, 1910–1923.* Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 1972.  
 The abbreviation "Berninger" refers to Herman Berninger,  
*Pougny: Jean Pougny (Iwan Puni), 1892–1956: Catalogue de l'œuvre. Vol. 2, Paris – Côte d'Azur, 1924–1956; Peintures.* Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 1992.  
 The abbreviation "Mason 1989" refers to Rainer Michael Mason, *Moderne, Postmoderne; Deux cas d'école; L'avantgarde russe et hongroise, 1916–1925; Giorgio de Chirico, 1924–1934,* Genève: Editions du Tricorne, 1989.

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Interior at Kuokkala, 1910  
 43 x 41 cm  
 oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 003  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 53

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Walk in the Sun, 1912  
 79 x 62 cm  
 oil on canvas  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 010  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 54

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Still Life: Relief with Hammer  
 1914–1921  
 80.5 x 65.5 x 9 cm  
 Gouache and hammer on cardboard  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 100  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 57

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Susanna and the Elders  
 (illustration from the journal *Roaring Parnassus*), 1914  
 22 x 17.5 cm  
 Berninger/Cartier p. 32  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Fig. 46

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Washing Windows*, 1915  
 85 x 67 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signed and titled in Cyrillic script on label on the reverse: "Ivan Puni Washing Windows"  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "KUSHAITE LAKTO BATSILL(IN)" (Eat Lactobacill[ae])  
 Berninger/Cartier 034  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 55

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*BANI (Baths)*, 1915  
 73 x 92 cm  
 Oil on canvas; on the verso of a landscape painting  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "BANI" (Baths)  
 Berninger/Cartier 038  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 64

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition*, Sketch for "Pictorial Sculpture (Berninger/Cartier 102)", 1915  
 48 x 26 cm  
 India ink, watercolor, graphite on paper, mounted on cardboard  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
 Writing at lower right: "variation"  
 Berninger/Cartier 115  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 167

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Model for "Pictorial Sculpture Berninger/Cartier 102)", 1915  
 30 x 21 x 1.2 cm  
 Wood, cardboard, sheet iron, wire, gouache  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 115  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 58

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Pictorial Sculpture, 1915  
 73 x 40 x 8 cm  
 Wood, cardboard, collage, gouache  
 Estate stamp at lower right  
 Berninger/Cartier 102  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 59



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Model for "Sculpture Berninger/  
Cartier 106)", 1915  
36.7 x 23.7 x 7.9 cm  
Wood, cardboard, sheet iron, plexiglas,  
wire, gouache  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 60

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Composition  
Sketch for "Relief with Saw, Berninger/  
Cartier 108)", 1915  
39 x 32 cm  
India ink and graphite on paper,  
mounted on cardboard  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script:  
"Puni 1916r"  
Writing at center in Cyrillic script: "GAS" (Gas);  
and at lower right: "N 11 variation lv. Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier 127  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 167

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Relief with Saw, 1915–1920  
76 x 72 x 15 cm  
Wood, sheet iron, cardboard, glass, gouache  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "GAS" (Gas)  
Berninger/Cartier cat. no. 108  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 61

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Model for "Sculpture Berninger/  
Cartier 109)", 1915  
30.5 x 20.5 x 5.5 cm  
Wood, cardboard, sheet iron, gouache  
Unsigned and undated  
Writing above center at left in Cyrillic script:  
"STR ?"; and below center at right in  
Cyrillic script: "VVK"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 58

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Model for "Sculpture Berninger/  
Cartier 111)", 1915  
36 x 26.2 x 6 cm  
Wood, cardboard, gouache, oil  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 60

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Cubo-Sculpture, 1915  
70 x 50 x 9 cm  
Wood, cardboard, oil, and gouache on plywood  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier 111  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 166

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Relief with Pincers, 1915  
55 x 32 x 9 cm  
Wooden washboard, iron pincers, red ball  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 56

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Pictorial Sculpture, 1915  
70 x 46 x 10 cm  
Wood, cardboard, oil, and gouache on plywood  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 62

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Composition for a Pictorial Sculpture, 1915  
48 x 34.5 cm  
India ink and graphite on paper, mounted  
on cardboard  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script:  
"Puni"  
Writing at lower right: "variation lv. Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier 117  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 167

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Suprematist Relief, 1915  
70 x 50 x 9 cm  
Wood, tin, cardboard, oil, and gouache  
on plywood  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 166

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Suprematist Composition, 1915  
91 x 61.5 x 3.5 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier 035  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 65

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Staircase, 1915  
35 x 19 cm  
India ink on paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier 162  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 71

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Relaxation in a Harem, 1915/1916  
64 x 73 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower left in Cyrillic script: "lv. Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 67

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Whist* (Card Players), 1915/16  
72 x 64 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script  
"lv. Puni"  
Writing at bottom in Cyrillic script:  
"VIST" (Whist)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 66

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
The Couple, 1916  
17.6 x 22 cm  
India ink on paper, mounted on cardboard  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier 192  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 70

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Old Music, 1916  
31 x 24 cm  
India ink on paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier 193  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 173

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Embrace, 1916  
22 x 17.6 cm  
India ink and pencil on ruled paper,  
mounted on cardboard  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier 194  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 70

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
The Seamstress, 1916  
29 x 17 cm  
India ink on paper  
Signature at lower center: "Ivan Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier 195  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 172

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Suprematist Sculpture, 1917  
60 x 50 x 10.2 cm  
Plywood, cardboard, paint on plywood  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 63

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Composition, 1917  
33 x 25 cm  
India ink and graphite on paper, mounted  
on cardboard  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script:  
"Puni 1917r 25a"  
Writing at lower center: "variation Iv. Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier 140  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 167

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Khlebnikov Reads to Xana, 1917  
20 x 17 cm  
India ink on paper  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni  
1917r"  
Berninger/Cartier 201  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 48

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Revolution, 1917  
30.5 x 23 cm  
India ink on paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier cat. no. 209  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 172

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Night, the Sailors' Patrol, 1917  
27.5 x 21 cm  
India ink on paper  
Signature at lower right next to the shadow  
of the lamppost in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier 210  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 172

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
The Street – Vitebsk, 1917  
36 x 24.7 cm  
Pencil, colored pencil, and india ink on paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger/Cartier 243  
Kunsthaus Zürich, Grafische Sammlung  
Page 72

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Novoie Iskusstvo*  
(New Art) (Variation 1), 1917/1918  
79.5 x 59.5 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script:  
"I. Puni 19"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "Novoie Iskusstvo"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 135

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Novoie Iskusstvo*  
(New Art) (Variation 2), 1917/1918  
66.5 x 59.5 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower center in Cyrillic script:  
"Iv. Puni"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "Novoie Iskusstvo"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 134

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Novoie Iskusstvo*  
(New Art) (Variation 3), 1917/1918  
65.5 x 59.5 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower center in Cyrillic script:  
"Iv. Puni"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "Novoie Iskusstvo"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 4

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Novoie Iskusstvo*  
(New Art) (Variation 4), 1917/1918  
66.5 x 55.5 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Unsigned and undated  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "Novoie Iskusstvo"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 136

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Schas* (Time), 1917/1918  
57 x 71.5 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower left in Cyrillic script: "Iv Puni"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "SHAS" (Time)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 137

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Ace of Spades*  
(Variation 2), 1917/1918  
52 x 45 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv Puni"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "PIK" (Spade)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 138

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Whist* (Ace of Clubs), 1917/1918  
51.5 x 38 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv Puni"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "VIST" (Whist)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 138

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Checkmate*, 1917/1918  
70.3 x 49 cm  
Oil on wood  
Signature at lower left in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "SCHACHMATY"  
(Checkmate)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 139

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Music*  
Advertising sign for a music store  
in Saint Petersburg, 1917/1918  
70 x 105 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
Writing in Cyrillic script: "MUSYKA" (Music)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 140



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Francotte*, 1917/1918  
 58 x 88 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower left in Cyrillic script: "Iv Puni"  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "Le Frankkott"  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 141

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Revolver 45 Cal.*, 1917/1918  
 68.5 cm (diameter)  
 Oil on wood  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "NAGAN CAL. 45"  
 (NAGAN revolver 45 caliber)  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 144

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pendulum Clock*, 1917/1918  
 84 x 52 cm  
 Oil on wood  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 143

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Futurist Decoration for a Repair Shop*, 1917/1918  
 94 x 45 cm  
 Oil on wood  
 Writing in Cyrillic script at top: "KABAK" (inn);  
 upper right: "D"; center: "SPOSH" (possibly to be  
 read as "SAPOSH," or "shoe"); and below right:  
 "SHLIA" (possibly to be read as "SHLIAPA,"  
 or "hat")  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Cigarettes*, 1917/1918  
 96.5 x 66.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv Puni"  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "PAPIROSY" (Cigarettes)  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 142

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Tobacco*, 1917/1918  
 88 x 64 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower left in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "TABAK" (Tobacco)  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 142

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Homage to Carpentry*  
*Still Life with Saw and Canvas Stretcher*  
 1917/1918  
 87.5 x 60.6 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "STOLYAR" (Carpenter)  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 145

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pink Vase*, 1917–1919  
 65 x 49 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 051  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 68

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Red Violin*, 1919  
 115 x 146 cm  
 Distemper on paper, mounted on canvas  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 060  
 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris  
 Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de  
 création industrielle  
 Donation de Xénia Pougny (Paris) en 1966  
 Page 69

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Midnight in Vitebsk*, 1919  
 78.2 x 61.2 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv Puni"  
 Writing in Cyrillic script: "POLNOCH"  
 (Midnight)  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 71

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Snow (Vitebsk)*, 1919  
 32 x 22.5 cm  
 India ink and pencil on paper  
 Signature at lower right: "Ivan Puni"  
 Berninger/Cartier 221  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Fig. 124

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Railroad Car*, 1919  
 34 x 20.5 cm  
 India ink, pencil, colored pencil, and watercolor  
 on paper  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Writing in center in Cyrillic script: "SHD"  
 (Abbreviation for "railroad"); and at center left  
 in Cyrillic script: "WOJN" ("war" or "military")  
 Berninger/Cartier 227  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 73

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Wooden Fence*, 1919  
 31 x 21.5 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and colored pencil on paper  
 Writing at lower left in Cyrillic script: "Anastasia  
 Chaadayeva . . . Ivan Puni" and "Sov N . . . Lichn"  
 (Personal invitation)  
 Berninger/Cartier 234  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 173

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Vitebsk – The City*, 1919  
 30.5 x 20 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and colored pencil on paper  
 Unsigned, incorrectly dated 1915  
 Berninger/Cartier 239  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 73

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Entry to a House in Vitebsk*, 1919  
 30 x 21 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and colored pencil on paper  
 Signature at lower right: "Ivan Puni"  
 Berninger/Cartier 241  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 72

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*The Shoemaker's Store in Vitebsk*, 1919  
 30 x 21 cm  
 India ink and pencil on paper  
 Signature at lower right: "J Pougny"  
 Writing at lower right in Cyrillic script: "ME"  
 Berninger/Cartier 244  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 172

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Pool Player*, 1920  
 40.5 x 35 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and watercolor on paper  
 Signature at lower left: "Jean Pougny"  
 Berninger/Cartier 256  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 171

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Juggler, 1920  
39 x 22 cm  
Pencil and gouache on paper  
Signature at lower right: "Ivan Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 170

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Composition (Uprising in the Factories)*, 1920  
30.7 x 21.6 cm  
India ink and pencil on paper  
Signed upper left: "Ivan Puni"  
Writing at upper left in Cyrillic script: "RSR"  
Berninger/Cartier 212  
Collection Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo,  
The Netherlands  
Page 173

Ivan Albertowitch Puni  
Komposition (Konstruktivistisches Stilleben),  
1920/1921  
67 x 53,5 cm  
oil on canvas  
Signatur at lower right: "Iw. PUNI"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 178

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Synthetischer Musiker* (Synthetic Musician), 1921  
145 x 98 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower left: "Ivan Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier 68  
Berlinische Galerie – Landesmuseum für  
Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur  
Page 175

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Blind Musician, 1921  
89 x 57 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower left: "Iw. Puni"  
Writing at upper right in Cyrillic script: "Cel"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 176

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Study for "Self-Portrait at the Mirror", 1921  
28 x 21 cm  
Graphite and gouache on paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Writing at upper right: "14"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 176

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Self-Portrait at the Mirror, 1921  
81.4 x 56 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower left: "Iw. Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 177

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
The Accordion Player, 1921  
61 x 34 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right: "Iw. Puni"  
Berninger/Cartier 077  
Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris  
Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de  
création industrielle  
Donation de Xénia Pougny (Paris) en 1959  
Page 182

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Pool Player, 1921  
76 x 64 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv. Puni"  
Writing below in Cyrillic script: "SHAR" (Ball)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 174

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Russian Black Marketeer in Berlin, 1921  
104 x 98 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: "Iv Puni"  
Writing at upper left in Cyrillic script: "RUSSE"  
(Russian man); and at lower right: "BALT"  
(Baltic man)  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 174

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Caricature of Alexander Archipenko  
(1887–1964), 1921  
22.5 x 25 cm  
Pencil on ruled paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Writing at lower center: "Archipenko"  
Berninger/Cartier 261  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 183

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Caricature of the gallery owner Herwarth Walden  
(1878–1941) at the piano, 1921  
22.5 x 28.5 cm  
Pencil on ruled paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Writing at lower left: "Herwarth Walden"  
Berninger/Cartier 259  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 183

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Caricature of the gallery owner Herwarth Walden  
(1878–1941), 1921  
28.5 x 22.5 cm  
Pencil on ruled paper  
Unsigned and undated  
Writing at lower left: "Herwarth Walden, Berlin"  
Berninger/Cartier 260  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 127

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Manifesto for the ball at Herwarth Walden's  
Galerie Der Sturm, 1921  
21 x 14 cm  
Pencil and gouache on paper  
Signature at lower right: "I. Puni"  
Writing at lower right: "17"  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 183

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
*Bal Lettriste* of Galerie Der Sturm –  
The Cyrillic letter "V", 1921  
36 x 22 cm  
India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
Signed at lower right: "Pougny"  
Writing at upper center in Cyrillic script: "VY"  
(She/her)  
Berninger/Cartier 267  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 171

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
*Bal Lettriste* of Galerie Der Sturm –  
Red Dancer, 1921  
24 x 16.5 cm  
India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger/Cartier 268  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 170



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
*Bal lettriste* of Galerie Der Sturm –  
 The Cyrillic letter “T”, 1921  
 34.5 x 22 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 270  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 171

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
*Bal lettriste* of Galerie Der Sturm –  
 Headless man, 1921  
 27 x 14 cm  
 India ink, pencil, and gouache on paper  
 Signature at lower right: “Pougny”  
 Berninger/Cartier 271  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 170

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Costume for an unrealized ballet at the  
*Bal lettriste* of Galerie Der Sturm –  
 Female dancer, 1921  
 26 x 18.5 cm  
 Watercolor, pencil, and gouache on paper  
 Signature at lower left in Cyrillic script: “Iv. Puni”  
 Writing at upper right: “N.8”  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 170

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Invitation to the Expressionists’ Ball or  
 Sturm-Ball at the Berlin Zoo on 8 March 1921,  
 with the drawing *Foxtrot* by Ivan Puni, 1921  
 43.5 x 16.2 cm  
 Berninger/Cartier p. 137  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Fig. 134

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Group of five drawings, of which three are  
 preliminary drawings for the painting  
 Berninger/Cartier 88, 1921/1922  
 29 x 32 cm  
 Pencil on paper  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 266  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 180

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Still Life: Glass and Bottle, 1921/1922  
 61 x 46.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: “I. Puni”  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 180

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Still Life with White Bottle, 1922  
 68 x 42 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 93  
 Berlinische Galerie – Landesmuseum für  
 Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur  
 Page 181

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 “Acht Linoleumschnitte” (Eight linocuts),  
 Copy no. 8 of 25  
 1. *City*; 2. *City*; 3. *Staircase*; 4. *Streetlamp*; 5. *Pool  
 Player*; 6. *Staircase*; 7. *Windows*; and 8. *Houses-  
 Small Café*, 1922  
 28.5 x 21 cm  
 Linocuts, heightened with gouache, on paper  
 Signature at lower left on each: “Iv. Puni”  
 Berninger/Cartier 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296,  
 297, 298  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Pages 186 and 187

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Still Life with Saw and Palette, 1923  
 77 x 51 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Unsigned and undated  
 Berninger/Cartier 095  
 Berlinische Galerie – Landesmuseum für Moderne  
 Kunst, Photographie und Architektur  
 Page 179

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
*Modern Painting* (in Russian), published by  
 Frenkel Verlag, Berlin, 1923  
 32 x 24.5 cm  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Fig. 130

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Composition (with Displaced Circle), 1922  
 32.4 x 25.6 cm  
 Linocut on paper  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: “Iv. Puni”  
 Berninger/Cartier 286  
 Mason 1989, 41  
 Cabinet des estampes du Musée d’art  
 et d’histoire, Genève (Inv. E 79/568)  
 Page 184

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Composition (with Comma), 1922  
 32.5 x 25.7 cm  
 Linocut on paper  
 Signature at lower left in Cyrillic script: “Iv. Puni”  
 Berninger/Cartier 288  
 Mason 1989, 44  
 Cabinet des estampes du Musée d’art et  
 d’histoire, Genève (Inv. E 87/1)  
 Page 184

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Composition, 1922  
 32.4 x 25.3 cm  
 Linocut on paper  
 Signature below in Cyrillic script: “Iv. Puni”  
 Berninger/Cartier 289  
 Mason 1989, 43  
 Genève, Cabinet des estampes du Musée d’art et  
 d’histoire (Inv. E 87/3)  
 Page 185

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Composition, 1922  
 32.5 x 25.5 cm  
 Linocut on paper  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: “With  
 sympathy and . . . Iv. Puni”  
 Berninger/Cartier 290  
 Mason 1989, 42  
 Genève, Cabinet des estampes du Musée d’art  
 et d’histoire (Inv. E 87/2)  
 Page 184

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
 Composition (with the Letters J R YA), 1922  
 32.5 x 25.5 cm  
 Linocut on paper  
 Signature at lower right in Cyrillic script: “IV  
 Puni”; and on the verso: “1/4 . . . IV Puni/N3”  
 Berninger/Cartier –  
 Mason 1989, 45  
 Genève, Cabinet des estampes du Musée  
 d’art et d’histoire (Inv. 84/1)  
 Page 185

Jean Pougny  
 Auto Repair Shop, 1928/1929  
 50 x 61 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower left: “Pougny”  
 Berninger 350  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 216

Jean Pougny  
 Large Boulevards, 1930  
 65 x 81 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower right: “Pougny” and dated  
 Berninger 369  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Fig. 217

Jean Pougny  
 Italian Store, 1930/1931  
 54 x 65 cm  
 Oil on canvas  
 Signature at lower left: “Pougny”  
 Berninger 391  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 218

Jean Pougny  
Chair, Globe, Violin, and Shell, 1930/1931  
73 x 60 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger 414  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 219

Jean Pougny  
Porte d'Auteuil, 1930/1932  
54 x 65 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 386  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Masks, 1935  
19.5 x 53 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature below and upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 457  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 220

Jean Pougny  
Antibes, 1942-44  
15 x 18 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 564  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Paris Roofs in the Evening, 1943  
9.5 x 15 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on wood  
Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 769  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
The Seine – Winter Landscape, 1943/1944  
11 x 23 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 772  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 219

Jean Pougny  
In the Théâtre du Montparnasse, 1943-45  
13 x 15 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger 831  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 221

Jean Pougny  
Bus Stop, 1944  
18.5 x 14 cm  
Oil on cardboard  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 567  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Moroccan Table, 1944  
32 x 32.5 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 685  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
White Chair and Paintbox, 1944  
31 x 39 cm  
Oil on canvas  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 687  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 222

Jean Pougny  
Harlequin with Red Mask, 1944  
40 x 24 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 705  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 223

Jean Pougny  
The Pianist, 1944  
22 x 24 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 734  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 224

Jean Pougny  
Governess and Children, 1944  
17.5 x 17 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature below and at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 819  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 222

Jean Pougny  
Pulcinello Seated, 1944  
24 x 10 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Writing at upper center: "polichinel"  
Berninger 830  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Pulcinello with Pipe, 1944  
21 x 22 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 833  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Chair, Plate with Fruit, Red Cloth, 1945  
30 x 32 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 894  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
The Seine in Spring, 1946  
12 x 21.5 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on reinforced wood  
Unsigned  
Berninger 741  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 225

Jean Pougny  
Mother and Child, 1946  
20 x 22 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Harlequin, 1946/1947  
27 x 24.5 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Unsigned and undated  
Berninger 877  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Interior with Green Easel, 1946/1947  
33 x 26.5 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 912  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
Studio, 1947  
11 x 58 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 905  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 225



Jean Pougny  
 Small Table with Bibelots, 1947/1948  
 46 x 38 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 903  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 226

Jean Pougny  
 Lady with Black Gloves, 1948  
 30 x 19 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 945  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
 Large Harlequin, 1948/1949  
 79 x 23.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 977  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
 Orange Armchair, 1949  
 33 x 35.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 919  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 227

Jean Pougny  
 Beach in Cannes, 1949  
 17.5 x 26.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 967  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 230

Jean Pougny  
 Interior with Striped Carpet, 1950  
 75.5 x 24 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 993  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 229

Jean Pougny  
 Studio (Decorative Painting), 1950/1951  
 75 x 67 cm  
 Oil and gouache on reinforced cardboard  
 Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1009  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 228

Jean Pougny  
 Bois de Boulogne, 1951  
 21.5 x 34 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1054  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 230

Jean Pougny  
 Harlequin Head, 1952  
 26 x 25 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Center right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1027  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 230

Jean Pougny  
 Concert, 1952  
 20.5 x 28 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1037  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 231

Jean Pougny  
 Beach, 1952  
 37.5 x 11 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1039  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
 Decorative Toile de Jouy and Black Cupboard,  
 1953  
 80 x 22 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1082  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 232

Jean Pougny  
 Jardin du Luxembourg, 1954  
 21 x 36.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature below near center: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1128  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 233

Jean Pougny  
 Pink Beach, 1954  
 29.5 x 36.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1163  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 233

Jean Pougny  
 Rue Vercingétorix, 1955  
 50 x 15 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1131  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 229

Jean Pougny  
 White Basket with Fruit, 1955  
 16 x 38 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at upper right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1166  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
 Black Chair against Red Background, 1955  
 41.5 x 17 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1168  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 232

Jean Pougny  
 Strand (part of a triptych), 1955  
 17 x 28 cm  
 Oil on cardboard  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1183  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
 Beach (part of a triptych), 1955  
 17 x 28 cm  
 Oil on cardboard  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1183  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
 Beach (part of a triptych), 1955  
 21 x 24 cm  
 Oil on cardboard  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1184  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean Pougny  
 Montparnasse, 1955/1956  
 23.5 x 37.5 cm  
 Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
 Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
 Berninger 1206  
 Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
 Page 233

Jean Pougny  
Still Life with Fruit, 1956  
37 x 12 cm  
Oil on canvas, mounted on pavatex  
Signature at lower right: "Pougny"  
Berninger 1169  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 234

Jean Pougny  
Balcony (based on a drawing from 1914/1915,  
Berninger/Cartier cat. no. 157), 1958  
45 x 16 cm  
Lithograph on paper  
Berninger cat. no. 298 bis  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 43

### Photographs and Documents

Ivan Puni at fourteen in military dress,  
with monkey, 1905  
Photograph  
31 x 25 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 12  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 12

Ivan Puni with his family, Kuokkala, 1908  
Photograph  
17 x 13 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 13  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 13

Ivan Puni with his family, Kuokkala, 1909  
24.5 x 31  
Berninger/Cartier p. 14  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Puni (left) with his family, 1913  
Photograph  
16 x 12 cm  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Xana Boguslavskaya (1892–1972)  
Ivan Puni and Xana Boguslavskaya's apartment  
house from 1913 to 1916, on Gatchinskaya Street,  
Saint Petersburg  
Photograph  
1962  
17.6 x 12.4 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 27  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 39

Xana Boguslavskaya  
Ivan Puni and Xana Boguslavskaya's apartment  
house from 1916 to 1920,  
Petrotsavodskaya Street 43, Saint Petersburg  
Photograph  
1962  
17.6 x 12.4 cm  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 15

Anonymous  
Photograph of Xana Boguslavskaya  
in Ukrainian costume, 1911  
17.4 x 22 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 17  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 14

Anonymous  
Exhibition catalog "Union of Youth"  
1911/1912  
42.5 x 31.7 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier pp. 25–24  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Yuri Annenkov (1889–1974)  
Portrait of Ivan Puni, 1912  
30.5 x 24 cm  
Pencil on paper  
Signed upper left: "Y Annenkov 1912/  
Paris Campagne Prem 9"  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 11

Anonymous  
Exhibition catalog "Union of Youth"  
1913/1914  
42.5 x 31.7 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier pp. 28–29  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster for the opening of the "First Futurist  
Exhibition of Paintings 'Tramway V'", 1915  
36.5 x 26 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 34  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 16

Anonymous  
Catalog of the "First Futurist Exhibition  
of Paintings 'Tramway V'", 1915  
22 x 14.3 cm (closed)  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Clipping from a Saint Petersburg newspaper  
with a review by E. Safianov of the "First Futurist  
Exhibition of Paintings 'Tramway V'" and repro-  
ductions of works by Ivan Puni and Vladimir Tatlin,  
1915  
26 x 18.3 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 39  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Clipping from the journal *Russia's Voice* with a  
review of the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paintings  
'Tramway V'" and caricatures of Xana Boguslav-  
skaya, Alexandra Exter, Vladimir Tatlin, Ivan Puni,  
and Olga Rozanova, 1915  
28.5 x 15.2 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 35  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 145

Anonymous  
Clipping from the journal *Ogonek* with reproduc-  
tions of Ivan Puni's works *Study* and *Portrait  
of the Artist's Wife* at the "First Futurist Exhibition  
of Paintings 'Tramway V'", 1915  
15 x 19.3 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 38  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 18

Anonymous  
Clipping from a Saint Petersburg newspaper with  
a review of the "First Futurist Exhibition of Paint-  
ings 'Tramway V'" and reproductions of works by  
Ivan Klyun, Kazimir Malevich, Xana Boguslav-  
skaya, and Ivan Puni, 1915  
17.5 x 19.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 40  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 115

Anonymous  
The article *Easter with the Futurists* from a Saint  
Petersburg newspaper with photograph of Nikolai  
Kulbin's studio with Kulbin, Olga Rozanova, Arthur  
Lourié, Vassili Kamenski, Vladimir Mayakovski,  
and Ivan Puni, 1915  
26.3 x 18.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 49  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 40

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster for the opening of the "Last Futurist Exhi-  
bition of Paintings '0.10'" on 19 December 1915,  
1915  
36 x 27 cm  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 116



Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster for the opening of the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" on 19 December 1915, 1915  
74 x 55.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 51  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 1

Vladimir Tatlin (1885–1953)  
Manifesto on the occasion of the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 1915  
37.5 x 26.5 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier pp. 54/55  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster announcing lectures by Kazimir Malevich and Ivan Puni on modern art, on the occasion of the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" on 12 January 1916, 1916  
26 x 35 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 69  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 17

Ivan Albertovich Puni  
Poster announcing lectures by Kazimir Malevich and Ivan Puni on modern art, on the occasion of the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" on 12 January 1916, 1916  
70 x 53.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 68  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Page 2

Anonymous  
Exhibition catalog the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 1915/1916  
29 x 22.5 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. 51  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 144

Anonymous  
Clipping from a Saint Petersburg newspaper with photograph of works by Kazimir Malevich in the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'" 1915/1916  
12 x 14 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 81  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 41

Anonymous  
Clipping from *The Day* with a review of the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 20 January 1916  
14.5 x 13 cm  
Berninger/Cartier –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Poem from the *Petersburg Paper* mocking the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 1916  
19 x 13.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 60  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Clipping from a Saint Petersburg newspaper with reproductions of works by Ivan Klyun, Olga Rozanova, and Ivan Puni in the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings '0.10'", 1915  
17.5 x 19.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 65  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 7

Anonymous  
Xana Boguslavskaya, Ivan Puni, Puni's sisters Olga and Julie, and others, 1918  
14.3 x 11.3 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 102  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 152

*Art of the Commune*, 5 January 1919. Publication of the Department of Plastic Arts at the Office of the Commissar for National Education, with the article *The Creation of Life* by Ivan Puni, 1919  
45 x 32 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. 98  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 117

Anonymous  
Russian invitation to the exhibition "Iwan Puni," Galerie Der Sturm, Berlin, February 1921  
1921  
8.5 x 14 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 22

Anonymous  
Catalog of the exhibition "Iwan Puni," Galerie Der Sturm, Berlin, February 1921  
22.7 x 14.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 126f.  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 131

Anonymous  
Catalog of the exhibition "Iwan Puni," Galerie Der Sturm, Berlin, February 1921  
22.7 x 14.5 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 126f.  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Four photographs of the exhibition "Iwan Puni," Galerie Der Sturm, 1921  
30 x 24 cm, 24 x 30 cm, 22.4 x 30.5 cm, and 30 x 25 cm  
Berninger/Cartier pp. 128–29  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Photograph of the installation of Puni's drawings in the Galerie Der Sturm showing, on the left, *Composition: Uprising in the Factories* of 1920 (fig. 173), and a clipping from a German newspaper with this photograph, 1921  
11.3 x 16 cm and 14 x 22.7 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. 125  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 128

Anonymous  
Clipping from the journal *Die Dame*, with photographs of Xana Boguslavskaya in a cubist costume designed by Ivan Puni and of the parade of the "sandwich people" in the streets of Berlin on the occasion of Puni's exhibition at Galerie Der Sturm in February 1921, 1921  
17.5 x 22 cm and 18 x 24 cm  
Berninger/Cartier cat. no., pp. 136–37  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 126 and 127

Kurt Schwitters  
Postcard *Construction for Elegant Women*, dated 26 September 1921, addressed to Ivan Puni, 1921  
14 x 9.4 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Invitation to the Sturm-Ball at the Berlin Zoo, 8 February 1922, with the announcement that the decorations for the rooms, etc., will be designed by Xana Boguslavskaya, 1922  
15 x 23.5 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Ivan Puni *Joueur/Musikant*, postcard for the journal *Der Futurismus*, Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1922  
14.2 x 8.7 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 147

- Anonymous  
Clipping from the journal *Die Dame*, no. 16 (1922), with a photograph of Xana Boguslavskaya, 1922  
24.5 x 30.5 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 118
- Anonymous  
Journal *Contemporanea*, vol. 1 (1922): 103, with photograph of and report on Xana Boguslavskaya by Veiga Simoes, the former Portuguese ambassador in Berlin, 1922  
29 x 21 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich
- Anonymous  
Clipping from *Hamburger Illustrierte Zeitung*, no. 22 (May 1922), with an article on the "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung" and a photograph of Ivan Puni's *Synthetischer Musiker* (Synthetic musician), 1922  
37.5 x 27 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. 130  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 148
- Journal *L'esprit nouveau*, no. 23 (June 1920), edited by Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, with Amédée Ozenfant's article on Ivan Puni, 1922  
25 x 16 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich
- Anonymous  
Clipping from *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, no. 23 (June 1922), with an article on the "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung" and reproductions of Ivan Puni's *Synthetischer Musiker* (Synthetic musician) as well as works by Vladimir Tatlin and Rudolf Belling  
37.5 x 27 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier cat. no. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 123
- The journal *Der Futurismus*, nos. 2–3 (June – July 1922), edited by Vasari, with an illustration of Ivan Puni's *Synthetischer Musiker* (Synthetic musician) on p. 5  
29 x 23 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich
- A clipping from a journal with a reproduction of the lubok *Late at Night in the Forest* by Xana Boguslavskaya, circa 1922  
26.5 x 19.2 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 122
- The journal *Der Futurismus*, nos. 5–6 (October 1922), edited by Vasari, with the article *Charakterköpfe futuristischer Künstler: Ivan Puni* by Viktor Shklovski and an illustration of Ivan Puni's *Lustiger Bruder* (Merry fellow) of 1919, 1922  
31 x 23 cm (closed)  
Berninger/Cartier p. 139  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 121
- The journal *Das Kunstblatt*, no. 7 (1923), edited by Paul Westheim, with the article *Zur Kunst von heute* (On contemporary art) by Ivan Puni, 1923  
28.5 x 21.3 cm (closed)  
Berninger cat. no. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich
- Anonymous  
Ivan Puni, 1923  
Photograph  
24 x 18 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 119
- Marc Vaux  
Costume ball at the Académie Suédoise, Paris, 1920s; Xana and Jean Pougny are in the middle on the right, 1920–1930  
Photograph  
16.2 x 22.3 cm  
Berninger/Cartier p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 25
- Anonymous  
Invitation to and photograph of the costume ball at the Bal Alain, 14, rue de la Croix-Nivert, in Montparnasse in Paris, 12 May 1926, organized by Jean Pougny and his wife, Xana, 1926  
10.4 x 14 cm and 16.4 x 22.2 cm  
Berninger p. 11  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 24
- Aleksei M. Remizov (1877–1957)  
Handmade document of Jean Pougny's acceptance in the "Order of Monkeys", Paris, 22 April 1926, 1926  
18.5 x 29 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
The Order of Monkeys was an artists' group that took aim at everyday rationality. Its members included musicians, painters, writers, actors, and even children. The patron of this group was Czar Asyk, the monkey king, who signed the documents with his tail and was invisible, though there were photographs of him. He had his own mark (obez.marka) and stamp (obez'jan'ja pecat'). The group was also known as "obezvelvolpai" – a neologism of a kind typical in Russian consisting of the words "obez'jana" (monkey), "veliki" (great),
- "vol'nyj" (free), and "palata" (order, chamber), which can be translated roughly as "Great and Free Order of Monkeys." The document essentially states that Jean Pougny is receiving his Monkey Document as a sign of his acceptance as a Cavalier of the First Order of the Great and Free Order of Monkeys. As chancellor of the Obezvelvolpal, Remizov confirms the receipt of a painting as admission fee. The Order is identified again in Glagolitic script, and all the official symbols, like the mark at upper right and the stamp at lower left, are also in Glagolitic script, which gives the look of a very old document. (Transcription and note by Pius Frick, Basel)  
Fig. 23
- Postcard  
Jean Pougny and friends, Paris, 1939  
9 x 14 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 28
- Florence Henri  
Jean Pougny, Paris 1944  
Photograph  
29.5 x 22.3 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 31
- Typescripts of French translations of Ivan Puni's fairy-tales for the journal *Niva* in 1916 as well as photographs of his illustrations  
1950s  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 19 a und b
- Xana Boguslavskaya  
Jean Pougny and Herman Berninger in Pougny's studio, 1952  
Photograph  
6 x 6 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 33
- Sabine Weiss  
Jean Pougny with his dog, Billy, 1954  
Photograph  
24.5 x 24 cm  
Berninger p. 64  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich



Sabine Weiss  
Jean Pougny, painting in his studio, 1951  
Photograph  
17.5 x 25.9 cm  
Berninger p. 50  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zürich  
Fig. 157

Eva Besnyö  
Jean Pougny's studio, 1954  
4 photographs  
20 x 19.7 cm, 22 x 19.5 cm, 22 x 20 cm,  
and 18.5 x 22 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 136, 137 und 141

Atelier Muller, Paris  
Jean Pougny's Studio, 1950s  
Photograph  
23.2 x 30.2 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Xana Boguslavskaya and Herman Berninger in  
front of the Musée Toulouse-Lautrec on the occa-  
sion of the exhibition "Pougny," Albi, France, 1958  
2 photographs  
Each 6 x 6 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 34 and 37

Atelier Muller, Paris  
Views of the retrospective "Pougny," Musée  
National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1958  
2 photographs  
Each 23.8 x 30.2 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Anonymous  
Xana Boguslavskaya and Herman Berninger,  
Restaurant Les Marronniers, Montparnasse, Paris  
1959  
Photograph  
9.2 x 14 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 36

Anonymous  
Views of the exhibition "Pougny: Œuvres de  
jeunesse et œuvres choisies", Galerie Coard,  
Paris 1959  
2 photographs  
Each 16.6 x 22.3 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Xana Boguslavskaya  
Poster "Pougny" in front of the Kunsthau Zürich,  
1960  
Photograph  
6 x 6 cm  
Berninger –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich  
Fig. 155

Anonymous  
Invitation to the opening of the retrospective  
"Jean Pougny," Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 12  
December 1961 to 28 February 1962, 1961  
10.5 x 14 cm  
Berninger p. –  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean-Pierre Leloir  
Xana Boguslavskaya and John Brown at the  
opening of the retrospective "Jean Pougny,"  
Galerie Charpentier, Paris  
Photograph, 1961  
18 x 13 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

Jean-Pierre Leloir  
Caroline and Herman Berninger at the opening  
of the retrospective "Jean Pougny," Galerie  
Charpentier, Paris  
Photograph, 1961  
13 x 18 cm  
Iwan Puni-Archiv, Zurich

#### **Photographs from the Ruth und Peter Herzog Collection, Basel**

Anonymous  
Types russes: Accordion player, circa 1865  
Albumen print  
21.5 x 14.7 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Types russes: Violinist, circa 1865  
Albumen print  
20.5 x 13.3 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Types russes: Peasant working in garden  
Circa 1865  
Albumen print  
22.2 x 13.2 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Types russes: Peasant with rake and rope  
Circa 1865  
Albumen print  
22.2 x 13.5 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

William Carrick (1827–1878)  
Peasant with fur cap, circa 1875  
Albumen print, colored  
15 x 9.5 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

William Carrick  
Peasant with two boys with haystacks  
Circa 1875  
Albumen print  
13.6 x 9.5 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter-Herzog, Basel

William Carrick  
Peasant with long beard and felt hat  
Circa 1875  
Albumen print  
13.5 x 9.5 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

William Carrick  
Peasant in front of wooden wall, circa 1875  
Albumen print  
13.7 x 9.7 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

William Carrick  
Group of workers at mealtime, circa 1875  
Albumen print  
9.5 x 13.3 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

William Carrick  
Group of peasants at an intersection  
Circa 1875  
Albumen print  
9.5 x 13.5 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

William Carrick  
Album with various photographs, circa 1875  
Albumen prints  
Various formats  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Scherer and Nabholz Studio (active in Moscow  
in the late nineteenth century)  
Views of the Manufacture Emile Zündel,  
Moscow, circa 1890  
Album with 14 albumen prints  
Various formats  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Société Anonyme Nobel Frères: Une fontaine  
régularisée de naphte, circa 1900  
Gelatin silver print  
Circa 15.5 x 23 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Société Anonyme Nobel Frères: Usine de pétrole  
Circa 1900  
Gelatin silver print  
Circa 15.5 x 23 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Société Anonyme Nobel Frères:  
Dépot de pétrole à Batoum, circa 1900  
Gelatin silver print  
Circa 15.5 x 23 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Société Anonyme Nobel Frères:  
Station générale de pompes, circa 1900  
Gelatin silver print  
Circa 15.5 x 23 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Société Anonyme Nobel Frères:  
Destillerie de pétrole à l'époque de la  
visite de L.L.M.M. Impériales, circa 1900  
Gelatin silver print  
Circa 15.5 x 23 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Anonymous  
Société Anonyme Nobel Frères:  
Bateau à cisternes, circa 1900  
Gelatin silver print  
Circa 15.5 x 23 cm  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel

Viktor K. Bulla (1883–1944) and others  
Album with photographs of the celebrations  
in Petrograd for the anniversary of the Russian  
Revolution, on 28 pages with captions in  
white script, 1918  
34.5 x 24.7 cm  
Captions in white Cyrillic script  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel  
Pages 83–99

Viktor K. Bulla, and others  
Album with photographs of the celebrations  
in Petrograd for the anniversary of the Russian  
Revolution, on 17 pages with captions in  
black script, 1918–1919  
34.5 x 24.7 cm  
Captions in black Cyrillic script  
Sammlung Ruth und Peter Herzog, Basel  
Pages 83–99



## Bibliography Ivan Puni

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Eva Besnyö, Amsterdam: Fig. 136, 137, 141, 154

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Ruedi Habegger, Basel: Preparation of the photographs by Viktor Bulla and others from the Ruth and Peter Herzog Collection

Peter Moeschlin, Basel: Page 189

Andres Pardey, Basel: Fig. 9 and 171

AKG images, Berlin: Page 147

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Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Genf: Page 184 and 185

Max Ketzler, Innsbruck: Fig. 158

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Florence Henri, Paris: Fig. 31

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Peter Gaechter, Gaechter und Clahsen, Zürich: Fig. 8, 143 and 156

Kunsthau Zürich: Page 72 left

Frédéric Boissonnas und Fritz Eggler: Fig. 58 and 60

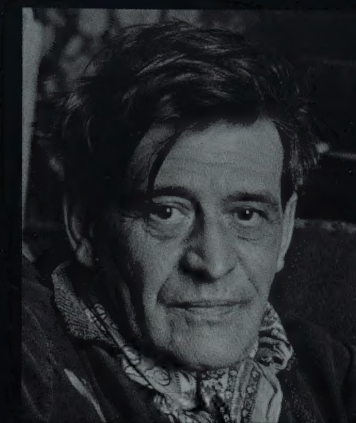
William Carrick: Fig. 59 and 60

Albert Eduard Felisch: Fig. 56 and 57

Alexander Rodchenko: Fig. 63, 67, 69

We thank Elizabeth Durst and Irina Menchova from the Institute of Modern Russian Culture, Los Angeles, for having drawn our attention to the photograph showing Xana Boguslavskaya in a dress by Puni (fig. 20) and supplying us with the model for its reproduction.





The loan of a largely unpublished portfolio of historical photographs in the Herzog Foundation in Basel has considerably enriched the exhibition. The photographs were made during the preparations for and celebration of the first anniversary of the Russian Revolution in Saint Petersburg, and as such are impressive documents of the euphoria and spirit of optimism of the populace and a generation of artists whose initial response was to devote their creative energies enthusiastically to the cause of radical social change.

In capturing a revolutionary moment, the photographs have a journalistic character, but they already observe Rodchenko's call for a "new image" in their use of unusual perspectives from above and below and especially their emphasis on diagonals.

The general euphoria would not last long: civil war, widespread shortages, and above all a huge bureaucracy called the artistic revolution into question. Henceforth, art would increasingly be instrumentalized as a tool of propaganda.

In 1918 Ivan Puni and his wife enthusiastically joined in decorating Saint Petersburg to celebrate the first anniversary of the revolution; a little later they too were disillusioned, and fled via Finland to Berlin.

The exhibition catalog is richly illustrated with previously unpublished material and contains contributions by the collectors Herman Berninger and Peter Herzog as well as essays by John E. Bowlit, professor at the University of Southern California and head of the Institute of Modern Russian Culture; Heiko Haumann, professor at the Historisches Seminar, University of Basel; Andreas Guski, professor at the Slawisches Seminar of the University of Basel; Guido Magnaguagno and Heinz Stahlhut at the Museum Jean Tinguely Basel.





# ИШАП

AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION FROM  
THE RUTH AND PETER HERZOG COLLECTION BASEL

MUSEUM JEAN TINGUELY BASEL